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THE MARQUESS AND MARCHIONESS OF WILLINGDON

SOUTHERN INDIA

*ITS POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC PROBLEMS*

by

Gilbert Slater, D.Sc.

PROFESSOR OF INDIAN ECONOMICS
IN MADRAS UNIVERSITY, 1915-21
ACTING PUBLICITY OFFICER TO
THE GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS,
1921-2

WITH A FOREWORD BY
THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF WILLINGDON

LONDON
GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD
MUSEUM STREET

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1936

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
UNWIN BROTHERS LTD., WOKING

F O R E W O R D

BY THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF WILLINGDON

IT is a great pleasure, as an old Governor of the Madras Presidency, who was associated with the work of Dr. Gilbert Slater when he was Professor of Economics at the Madras University, to write these few lines in order to recommend a study of his book to all those readers who wish to learn something of Southern India, which in many ways is, historically and traditionally, the most interesting part of that great country.

The volume gives the impression of one who lived and worked for twenty years in India, and was full of sympathy with the feelings and aspirations of the people. We may not agree with all the views to which he gives expression, but it certainly supplies, almost in the form of a diary, a most interesting account of the economic, social, and political happenings during the years he lived in India. Indeed, I think that this book will do much to increase interest in that part of India where the British connection first began and of which much too little is known and appreciated.

WILLINGDON

P R E F A C E

IN November 1915 I sailed for India to take up a five years' appointment in the University of Madras as its first Professor of Indian Economics, with the duty of carrying on and stimulating research into the economic conditions and problems of Southern India. I held that appointment till April 1921, when I took on for one year the duty of deputizing for Mr. J. T. Gwynn, I.C.S., on long leave, as Acting Publicity Officer to the Government of Madras, and, as such, became the official channel of communication between that government and the forty million inhabitants of the Presidency. I had previously been nominated by the Governor, Lord Willingdon, a member of the Madras Legislative Council, as newly constituted by the Act of 1919.

Since my return to England in April 1922 I have continued to keep in contact with the development of opinion and political feeling among Indian students, through holding appointments as a lecturer on Indian Economics to Indian Civil Service probationers in the London School of Economics and under the Oxford University I.C.S. Delegacy, by supervising the work of Indian research students, and in other ways.

The period from 1915 to 1922 during which I was in service in India was peculiarly momentous and critical. First in 1915 began the very effective organization of the Home Rule agitation by Mrs. Annie Besant, with the publication of her daily newspaper, *New India*, and the formation of a "Home Rule League," which before long captured the Indian National Congress. Then came, in 1917, the appointment as Secretary of State for India of Mr. E. S. Montagu, and his tour of India, preparatory to the drafting of the "Montford" (Montagu-Chelmsford) Reforms, which, when enacted by Parliament, threw the existing system of administration into the melting-pot, exasperating old discontents, and raising new problems with which we are still concerned. The coming into existence of the new constitution was heralded, most unfortunately, by the "Rowlatt Acts" for the suppression of sedition; and then came the troubles in the Punjab and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Moreover, Indian Mahomedans were roused to indignation by the Sèvres Treaty imposed on Turkey, and the Khilafat agitation

organized by Mahomed and Shaukat Ali brought about a savage Mopla rebellion in Malabar. Simultaneously Mr. Gandhi's Non-Cooperation movement swept India, with ever increasing peril to the British Raj, until its climax on February 4, 1922, when the massacre of police at Chauri Chaura induced Mr. Gandhi to order its cessation.

This period was not less eventful economically. Organized trade unionism made its first appearance in India in 1918, when Mr. B. P. Wadia created the Madras Labour Union, while the rising prices and general social disturbance caused by the war was provoking an epidemic of unorganized strikes. Trade unionism quickly spread to the much bigger industrial centre of Bombay, where it took strong hold, and whence it spread, aided by the post-war boom of trade, which forced up prices, employers' profits, and workers' cost of living, so that increase of money wages became a vital necessity. Wild fluctuations in the rupee-sterling exchange exaggerated the boom and the subsequent slump, and forced many importing firms, on pain of bankruptcy, to repudiate their bargains, while two of the worst monsoon failures on record in 1918 and 1920 taxed to the utmost the resources for prevention of famine, and the post-war influenza epidemic took a toll of perhaps as many as ten million lives.

The line of demarcation between economic and political science is everywhere a faint one, and in India it vanishes altogether. Soon after my arrival in Madras I was called into consultation on a great variety of politico-economic problems, first by heads of departments of the Madras Government, and later by the Government of India and the Diwans of certain Native States. My experience with the Publicity Office was also extremely interesting and enlightening.

Altogether my contacts with South Indian conditions and problems have been of an exceptional nature, and therefore I feel called upon to put my observations on record. This record is based partly upon memories, many of them very vivid, and partly on family letters sent home, and fortunately preserved. I am also indebted to Dr. Vera Anstey of the London School of Economics (lately of Bombay), and Dr. P. S. Lokanathan of the Economics Department of Madras University, for additional detailed information on some important topics touched upon. My thanks are

also due to Lady Pentland and Mr. F. H. Brown, C.I.E., for kind help and advice, to the Madras Agricultural Department, to the late Mr. F. C. Richards, I.C.S., and to Mr. E. Krishnamurti of Thettupalli, Chittoor District, for some of the photographs used as illustrations, and to the Oxford University Press for permission to use again those which have already appeared in *Some South Indian Villages*.

Lastly, my very special thanks are due to the Most Hon. the Marquess of Willingdon for the photograph of himself and the Marchioness of Willingdon, and for the Foreword which he has so kindly written for this book; and to Sir Richard Burn, C.S.I., who has been so kind as to go through the proofs with a lynx eye for mistakes.

I desire, in conclusion, to express the high esteem which my South Indian experiences have instilled into me for three classes of people; firstly, the Indian students of the University; secondly, the British and American missionaries, especially the medical women missionaries; thirdly, the members of the Indian Civil Service, who, as a body, are, perhaps beyond any other corps of administrators, distinguished for complete freedom from even suspicion of corruption or nepotism, and for wholehearted zeal in the public service. For the causes of what is wrong in Indian government—and there is much that is wrong—we must look elsewhere, and particularly at home.

GILBERT SLATER

OXFORD

May 1936

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SOUTHERN INDIA

CHAPTER I

PROLOGUE

It was in December 1915 that I first landed in India on my way to take up an appointment of Professor of Indian Economics in the University of Madras. The appointment was a new one, the policy of appointing University Professors being in itself a recent innovation. Previously the University of Madras, like other Indian Universities, had been purely of a Federal character. University teaching was the task of affiliated colleges of different grades; the business of the governing body of the University, its Senate, which consisted of elected representatives of the colleges with nominated members, acting through its Executive Committee, the Syndicate, was to hold examinations, confer degrees, and exercise a general supervision over the colleges in order to secure their efficiency. The new departure of calling upon the Universities in their corporate capacity to take a separate part in the work of teaching was taken by the Imperial Government of India, in response to an Indian demand, due to a widespread feeling that the existing system tended to be wooden, that it made no provision for research, and tended to reduce a university education to little more than a mere cramming of text-books and lecture notes. The Indian Government had accordingly provided for grants to be made to such universities as submitted approved schemes for using the money in the directions desired. The earliest schemes submitted and approved were those of Calcutta and Allahabad Universities; both provided for the appointment of Professors of Indian Economics.

The Syndicate of Madras University had at first taken a different view. It was satisfied with the teaching of Economics as provided by the colleges, and, in fact, did not consider it advisable that the University should overlap or compete with the colleges in any work they were doing already. It therefore proposed that the grant should be used to develop a new study, namely

the Philology of the Languages of South India. But this idea did not appeal to the local leaders of Indian opinion; they thought that Philology might wait, that it was urgent that Indians should be helped by their Universities to understand more fully the history of their own country, and its economic problems. With this view Lord Pentland's government had much sympathy, but it was reluctant to dictate to the University. A compromise was agreed upon, and the approved scheme provided for the appointment of professors for Sanscritic Philology, Dravidic Philology, Indian History and Indian Economics. When I departed for India, the Professors of Indian History and Sanscritic Philology had already been installed, and the latter had been entrusted with the task of training Readers who spoke the four chief Dravidic languages in the more abstruse science of Philology, in the hope that one of them would become competent to fill the vacant chair.

During the time when my appointment was passing through its various stages, I had leisure enough for availing myself of any opportunities that presented themselves for becoming better qualified for my Indian post. Madras, I ascertained, was within the Tamil-speaking area, which extends from about eighty miles north of Madras to Cape Comorin, being bounded on the north by the Andhra, or Telugu, country, and on the west by the Malayalim and Canarese areas, these four being the chief Dravidian languages. Oxford University still commanded the services of a Reader in Tamil, a Cingalese gentleman, Mr. Wikremasinghe; so I applied to him for instruction, and procured Dr. Pope's First Tamil Reader. I persisted in the study on the voyage, and engaged a pundit on reaching Madras, but my hopes of using what Tamil I acquired as a means of communication with Tamilians were soon undeceived. Tamil is spoken with extraordinary rapidity, all the words being run together, and until you have acquired enough mastery of the language to speak more or less in that fashion, it is impossible to make your interlocutor realize that you are trying to speak to him in his own language. The case is very similar with regard to the other Dravidian languages, with the result that English is used to an extent that astonishes a newcomer to South India. The study of Tamil is, however, of great interest in itself and for the light it throws on Dravidian mentality,

for it is perhaps the most logical of languages—at any rate it is superior in this respect to any European language with which I have any acquaintance.

There were about fifty Indian undergraduates in residence in Oxford in the Michaelmas Term, 1915, and they kindly invited me to attend a meeting of their Mejlis, and in other ways evinced much cordiality. I asked them whether they did not think that a chair in Indian Economics at an Indian University ought to go to an Indian; they said it should in a few years' time, but at the moment they had no men sufficiently trained, and they warmly welcomed my appointment in the meantime, and, strange to say, they did not seem to think that *my* ignorance of India and of Indian Economics mattered. In my efforts to abate that ignorance before sailing I learnt from Mr. H. A. L. Fisher that Madras was the pleasantest place of residence of all the great Indian cities; Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe, who had not long ceased to be editor of the *Statesman* of Calcutta, gave me his opinion, a very favourable one, of the Madras politicians; Professor (Sir) Patrick Geddes expounded to me theories about Indian architecture, gardening and town planning, besides giving me many introductions. He had lately returned from Madras, after showing his Cities Exhibition there, and lecturing on Town Planning. On Indian Economics proper, the most pertinent observation I received was from Mr. (Prof.) H. H. Dodwell, then Curator of the Madras Museum, who was home on leave. He remarked that the essential and all-important fact was that in India the Malthusian theory in its primitive form applied, population was pressing hard on the means of subsistence, and an excessive birth-rate was the main cause of the dense poverty which produced the balancing result of a similarly high death-rate. On the politico-economic side, Mr. (Dr.) John Matthai drew my attention to the efforts of Alfred Chatterton in Madras to assist the organization and establishment of new industries, and of the manner in which Lord Morley, as Secretary of State for India, had suppressed that initiative.

The voyage out gave me a glimpse into Indian psychology. Mr. and Mrs. Dodwell were on board with a little daughter, and there were also one or two more fair English children playing about on the decks, whom the Lascar sailors watched with most

affectionate eyes, eager for a chance to do something to give them pleasure. I thus got my first realization of that extreme Hindu fondness for children to which the Mirza Aziz referred when he said that every man ought to have four wives, a Persian to converse with, a Hindu to look after the children, a Khurasani to do the work, and a Tartar to be beaten when the others misbehaved. Soon after I got to Madras, I got another illustration. Mr. Tirunarayanan, a student at the Presidency College, had taken me down to the banks of the River Cooum which flows through the city, to show me the larvae of different varieties of mosquitoes, and to point out which were carriers of malaria. In the midst of his disquisition he looked at his watch and hurried away—it was the time when he went to tell stories to his little niece. That was a sacred obligation, not to be neglected even for the study of malaria, though for that study he had neglected his examination work in Early English, and so had incurred the disapproval of the College authorities.

Later, I was told by an English lady in Madras, who had three blue-eyed children with fair hair, that she frequently saw her Indian servants when they thought they were unobserved touching the children's heads lightly with the tips of their fingers, and then kissing them. I infer that the affectionate and admiring gaze with which the Lascars on the P. & O. steamer followed the children on board was due in part to their fair complexions. India in fact, seems to display, especially in the lowest castes, an inverted colour sense, being attracted, instead of repelled, by the coloration most contrasted with their own. The explanation may be partly in the fact that as a general rule the higher the caste the lighter the colour; and partly to the fact that exposure to the Indian sun darkens the skin; women and children are fairer than men, and a man will be darker or fairer according as he works in the open clad in a loincloth and turban, or covers his body with clothes and keeps mostly indoors. In consequence the well-to-do, merely by virtue of their economic status, are fairer than the poor; and among the peasants and coolies the women are fairer than the men and children fairer than adults. Lightness of complexion evidently is to the Indian male an element in sexual attraction, a fact that the matrimonial advertisements in Indian periodicals invariably illustrate, whether inserted by men desirous of getting

brides or of parents in quest of bridegrooms for daughters. The fairer the girl, the smaller the necessary dowry.

The political importance of this trait in Indian psychology is probably enormous. For many centuries before the East India Company was chartered the masses of the Indian people had been trained to revere the Brahmin caste as the highest because the fairest in complexion. When Europeans, and particularly when Englishmen arrived, it was inevitable that the masses of workers who tilled the fields and recruited the armies should look upon the newcomers as super-Brahmins, and that, so far as I could observe, was still their attitude invariably in South India during the period of my service there. Macaulay in his Essay on Clive emphasized the fact that the Indian sepoy preferred service under "John Company" for meagre pay and an exiguous pension to accepting the lavish promises of the recruiting agents of Indian princes; but the reason was, I am sure, not merely the one he mentions, that they discovered that the English had a higher standard in the matter of keeping promises, important though that motive was. With the Indian, considerations of social status weigh astonishingly high in comparison with economic ones; and the status of a servant depends on that of his master. Hence to take service with John Company was social advancement, especially for low-caste men. In Madras I was astonished to observe how reluctant a man who had once served a European employer was to accept service under an Indian, though under very favourable conditions, and with complete security, merely on account of what he regarded as a descent to a lower status.

The Honble. Mr. Madge, a leader of the Anglo-Indian community, was one of my fellow passengers. He it was, I understood, who took the chief part in persuading the Indian Government to make "Anglo-Indians" the official designation for those previously termed Eurasians. He argued to me that the new term was the more accurate, in spite of the fact that it has to cover a great many people whose European ancestors were Portuguese, and a few of other non-British descent. I thought it a pity to lose the convenient term Anglo-Indian for those natives of the United Kingdom more or less regularly resident in India. For them we have, per contra, to use the word "Europeans," which in India means, first, English, Welsh, Scots and Irish, secondarily Ameri-

cans, Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders, and lastly people from the continent of Europe. But to Mr. Madge linguistic convenience was naturally unimportant compared with the advantage to his community of a continual reminder to English people of their responsibility for its existence.

There was also a newly wedded American couple in our small company, bound for Madras, Mr. and Mrs. Noehren. Noehren had been recruited for the Department of Public Instruction through the Y.M.C.A. as an expert in physical training. He introduced net-ball and other games into the schools, organized the teaching of physical exercises, and was one of the first people to draw attention to the prevalence of hook-worm disease, called in England "miners' ankylostomiasis." Among the barefooted, who are the great majority of the population, the percentage infected with hook-worm goes up to 90 per cent, and even those who best tolerate the parasite are somewhat debilitated by it. Hook-worm is one of the causes of the poor average physique of Indian workers, though less important than malaria, under-feeding, and their excessively starchy diet.

CHAPTER II

BOMBAY CITY AND THE BOMBAY DECCAN

WHEN I landed in Bombay December had already so far advanced that I supposed that there was no reason why I should proceed immediately to Madras, to arrive there only just before the Christmas vacation of the University. Accordingly I determined to follow the advice impressed upon me by Professor (Sir Patrick) Geddes, to take the first opportunity of making the acquaintance of Dr. Harold Mann, then Principal of the Bombay Presidency Agricultural College at Poona. Accordingly I telegraphed to Poona, which is on the trunk line from Bombay to Madras, to arrange a meeting with Dr. Mann, and to Madras to notify my movements to the Registrar, and I put up in the Great Western Hotel to await replies.

Bombay in 1915 was, I believe, the most congested, over-crowded and insanitary city on the face of the earth. The enormous profits of its cotton industry, based on vast supplies of home-grown raw material, an equally vast home market, excellent communications by sea and rail, and an abundant supply of very cheap labour, still unaffected by trade unionism, and far more efficient than Bombay capitalists would admit, had caused factory after factory to be planted on the little area of Bombay Island. Foreign merchants in the first place, then British officials, and finally Parsi and Indian plutocrats, had seized upon the higher level of Malabar Hill for their residences, and private enterprise had provided for the hosts of workers who crowded into the city from the congested coastal district and the inland area of precarious rainfall, to seek wages and livelihood, what were known as "chauls," tall block buildings which housed many more families than they had rooms. When in 1920 and 1921 a special investigation was made into the housing conditions of the city, cases were found of as many as eight families to a single room, to be used for cooking, eating, sleeping and washing; and the measurement of one room, so occupied by six families, who had set up four fireplaces in the corners, allowed only six square feet per person, so that lying down they must have completely covered

the floor. Naturally, during my stay in Bombay I made no domiciliary visits, but I could guess something of the congestion from the multitudes of people who used the streets as dormitories. Poverty had taught the Indian masses to tolerate very hard couches, and preserved for them what was, as I suppose, the primitive ability to sleep like cats wherever they could find spots to lie down upon; hence they probably found it no great hardship to sleep in the streets as long as the nights were fine, but it would be a different matter during the monsoon rains. There has been a great improvement in Bombay housing since, the general rule among the working classes now being one room one family—and one family one room.*

I got a reply from Dr. Mann almost immediately, and stopped in Bombay only parts of two days and the intervening night. When I left my hotel my luggage was sent on to the Victoria Station of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway in advance by bullock cart. The hotel porter was summoned to carry it from my room to the pavement. It amounted to one big metal-lined wooden chest half full of books with clothing stuffed in to make the whole taut, a cabin trunk and smaller articles. With the help of a waiter the porter hoisted the chest on to his head, and then got the cabin trunk balanced on the top of it, then with smaller articles in his hands and under his arms he marched off, while I watched these proceedings amazed. He was slightly above middle height, but very broad. In Madras I found that it took four of the local coolies to shift that chest from one floor to another.

It is the Mahratta country which breeds the men of the type of that porter, the plateau of the Deccan, a district of thin soil, precarious rainfall, little tree growth, dry air and abundant sunshine. It grows millets and breeds cattle; one of its chief exports is dung cakes. Cattle dung is gathered sedulously while fresh and damp, collected into lumps about the size of four cricket balls, and then slapped on to the surface of a rock or wall to dry; each round, flat cake bears the impress of the hand and five fingers of the woman who fashioned it. These are sold for fuel in Bombay, where they are called "bratties" ("varatties" in Madras). The practice of using cattle dung as fuel instead of as manure is general throughout India. It is much condemned by official agriculturists,

* See note at end of chapter.

but it is in vain that they denounce it. The dung cakes supply the Indian housewife with just the slow-burning fuel which she requires for boiling milk, and in India milk is always boiled immediately; mixed with wood dung is said to be the cheapest fuel available in wheat-growing districts for baking bread. There is such a scarcity of wood for fuel in the Deccan that the local peasantry cannot be criticized for burning dung for their own cooking, but it is a pity that they should be tempted by the immediate money return to rob their own land, for on their thin soils the dung is badly needed to build up the humus and give greater retentiveness of water as well as for its plant-feeding value. In deltaic rice-growing areas the case is different. There the chief function of manure is to acrate the soil, and green manure gives better results than cattle dung. Moreover the rice growers save and use the ashes, which contain what are for their purpose the most valuable manurial elements in the dung.

The wealth of Bombay, and the fortunes of its mill-owners and merchants, is built up on the basis of immigrant labour of two types. The millets which form the staple food of the Deccan are rich in bone and flesh-forming constituents, and from that hungry but healthy land Bombay draws its labourers for work in the docks and elsewhere for tasks requiring physical strength. Since they come down the Ghats to crowd into the congested city, they are called Ghatis. On the other hand the narrow area between the Western Ghats and the sea, hot and damp, and very fertile, is very densely populated with redundant workers with small and pliant limbs and fingers specially suitable for tending textile machinery, who are already acclimatized to the steamy atmosphere which is preferred for cotton-mills.

My two or three days in Poona as the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Mann made me a warm sympathizer with Gandhi's movement for the revival of hand-spinning. It strikes the European observer at first sight as absurd to advocate such a hopeless attempt to compete with machinery, seeing that at best a fairly expert spinner can only earn about twopence in an eight hours day, but after all, when the choice is between nothing at all and twopence, which in a millet-growing area will supply bread corn for a man, or for a woman and young child, for a day, the twopence is preferable. In default of some bye occupation, something like six

months of the year, in the seasons when the rains do *not* fail, is spent by the Deccan peasantry in nearly complete idleness. When the rains come, all must be busy, ploughing and sowing; later, harvesting makes another short busy period. In specially favoured spots water for irrigation can be got from wells, and round such wells vegetables are grown, but this resource is available only for a small minority of the villagers. Otherwise, outside the two short busy seasons of sowing and reaping, there is in the Deccan scarcely anything for men to do, and not much for women. Bombay offers in comparison high money wages, and naturally the young men of the more prolific families go to Bombay in the hope of saving money and coming back and buying more land. But when they get there they find, usually, that they have to bribe a foreman to get them taken on. Moreover, in my time Bombay employers only paid wages monthly, and they had a playful habit of holding up the wage of one month till past the middle of the following one, so that wages were always in arrear for periods varying from two to six weeks.* Hence all these workers must begin by applying to the moneylender. The moneylenders are numerous and accommodating. They are of two types. One type caters for workers in relatively secure positions, definitely taken on by some mill or other established employer; these are usually traders also, and sell rice and other food-stuffs to the workers for credit. The other type will lend to workers who cannot offer even that much security. These are mostly Afghans, big, strong bullies, who extort interest at the most outrageous rates known even in India by threats of physical violence. It is to them that the newcomer must apply if he has no money of his own to get started on a job. When he gets out of the clutches of the Afghan, he becomes a client of the trading moneylender, the Baniah, and by degrees his hopes of ever saving any money and leaving Bombay fade out. If he withstands the novel temptations of the city drink shops and brothels, he may take a wife from his own village, and instal her in a corner of a room, but there is a large preponderance of men in the city, and venereal disease is rampant.

Meanwhile in the Deccan villages, after the labour force which is redundant during the slack period of the year has been drawn off to Bombay, what remains may prove insufficient during the

* I believe there has been an improvement in this respect since I left India.

busy weeks of the agricultural year, and the area under tillage and food production diminish in consequence. From these observations I concluded that nothing else would benefit the Deccan peasantry so much as the development of subsidiary industries to turn to account the long periods each year during which agricultural activity is in cessation. But if this is admitted, one must further admit the force of Mr. Gandhi's contention that hand-spinning is the one bye occupation immediately available for great numbers of under-employed rural workers. In 1915 hand-spinning still survived in many isolated places in India, and in 1920, during the great Lancashire cotton bubble when prices went sky-high, it had, for purely economic reasons, a considerable expansion. Khaddar, the plain cotton cloth of hand-spun yarn woven on the hand-loom, was found, as I was told by Indian students who followed Mr. Gandhi's lead in wearing it, to be good value, comfortable and durable, as, in the housewives' phrase, it "stands the dhobi well." The dhobi (washerman) washes clothes by alternately dipping them in water and dashing them against a rock, and this treatment, strange to say, instead of breaking the loosely spun fibres of Khaddar yarn, tightens the natural twist.

Six years after I landed in Bombay I had, as a member of the Madras Legislative Council, an opportunity to put forward the practical conclusion which I drew from these early observations. In the course of the Budget debate I made an appeal to the Director of Industries to investigate the problem of making hand-spinning more remunerative. Even before 1915 the department had done a great deal for hand-loom weaving by popularizing the fly shuttle, the earliest of important British textile inventions, whereby the weaver, on plain weaves, could increase his daily output about two and a half times. Why not explore for spinners the merits of the Spinning Jenny, which needed no mechanical power, and therefore was well adapted to fit into the framework of village life? If it succeeded, it would multiply each spinner's output by much more than two and a half, and the market would pretty certainly be able to absorb the increased output without being glutted. This appeal fell on deaf ears, perhaps because the revival of hand-spinning in India would not please the millowners. It would cut at the basis of their profits, whereas the persistence of hand-loom weaving does not, since the most profitable part

of the mill industry is the spinning of yarn for sale to the hand-weavers.

At the time of my visit to Poona, one of Dr. Mann's pre-occupations was the problem of saving cattle in years of monsoon failure. The technique of famine administration had already been perfected to such an extent that loss of human life when the crops failed even over a vast area through lack of rain had been eliminated, but the starvation of cattle remained to the very great injury of the peasantry. The one plant which flourishes in the Deccan when the monsoon fails is the prickly pear, which the Portuguese introduced from South America. I have seen a goat eating prickly pear, though in India I was never able to convince anybody to whom I told that observation that my eyes had not deceived me; and very likely even that goat which I caught in the act was only making an experiment which she would never repeat. Dr. Mann's investigations were directed towards finding out whether some cheap and readily available method could be discovered for burning off the prickles, and turning the prickly pear into cattle fodder—not good fodder, but better than nothing. He had found that method by using the flares which painters use for burning paint off woodwork, and in that way turned the unapproachable plant into juicy and moderately nutritious fodder which cattle would eat, and could eat without injury.

At the time of the 1918 famine, Dr. Mann was the acting Director of Agriculture for Bombay Presidency, and the results of his experiments were utilized on a large scale, and the lives of many thousands of oxen saved thereby. The available supply of painters' flares was quite inadequate, but Dr. Mann found that the blast of the ordinary village blacksmith's forge did just as well.

Dr. Mann showed me also the completed part of his village surveys afterwards published in the Bombay University Economic Series. For these he enlisted the help of a number of the members of his staff, and the selected villages were investigated from every possible point of view. It was a bit of pioneering work which I could admire, but which I did not see my way to imitate, as it demanded much technical knowledge.

The fact that Poona had been the capital of the great Mahratta Confederation was brought vividly before my mind by a visit to

a typical village of the neighbourhood, a village of houses strongly built of stone, surrounded by a stone wall pierced by gates. Those conquering marauders, who ravaged so repeatedly the greater part of India, evidently could not inspire fear in their neighbours without becoming full of fear themselves.

An even more memorable sight was afforded by a visit to a settlement of the untouchable caste who serve the community as scavengers and leatherworkers. To enter one of their huts I had to go on hands and knees, and then to crouch as low as I could and crawl through a small hole; when I got inside there was little more head room than was necessary to allow me to sit upright on the bare ground. These huts were constructed of flat stones, overlapping each other and piled round a central upright pole, looking as though a careless touch might bring the whole structure crashing down on anyone inside. They were grouped together on a rocky knoll, where there was no shelter from the heat of the sun. Just as Bombay City in 1915 could show what was probably the worst housing in the world for urban workers, so the Bombay Deccan could, it appeared, show the most deplorable shelters for workers in the country. Here also there was the added misery that any reasonable and adequate access to the wells for drinking water was begrimed to the outcastes. Naturally these unfortunates were undersized, dirty, obviously half-starved, and scantily clothed in filthy rags.

Note.—Housing and health in Bombay City

Overcrowding reached its highest pitch in Bombay in the last year of the war and the period immediately afterwards. Bombay was practically the basis of the operations in which the Indian army was engaged, and Bombay cotton manufacture, released from Lancashire competition, enjoyed a tremendous boom which lasted until Japanese competition became effective. In consequence vast numbers of immigrant workers were drawn into the already overcrowded city. The death-rate, always deplorably high, went up to monstrous figures; it was increased by the great rise in food prices, which nullified the effects of rising money wages, and swollen by the post-war influenza epidemic.

From 1920 onwards great efforts have been made to remedy these evils; indirectly by prohibiting the erection of new mills on Bombay Island, developing its communications with the low-lying islands on the north

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which form a continuous chain with it, converting tidal swamps into land available for building, and providing very cheap electric transport; directly by improving the water supply, and by providing housing by public authorities, the Bombay Improvement Trust, the Development Department and the Municipality. In the inquiry instituted by the Bombay Labour Department in 1932-3 into working-class budgets, in which a 3 per cent sample of families in the most exclusively working-class quarters of the city was taken, it was found that out of 1,469 families, while 790 lived in tenements belonging to private owners, 567 occupied tenements provided by the above-mentioned authorities and 148 tenements provided by mill-owners and other large employers. Overcrowding though still deplorably

Year	Death-rate	Infantile Death-rate		Year	Death-rate	Infantile Death-rate	
		Crude	Corrected			Crude	Corrected
1914	32.7	385.1	277	1924	33.4	419	275
1915	24.17	329.2	235.4	1925	27.5	356	228
1916	30.79	387.8	278.4	1926	27.6	389	255
1917	33.83	409.6	304.2	1927	23.8	316	214
1918	59.4	596	436	1928	23.6	311	—
1919	70.5	652	499	1929	22.9	298	—
1920	47.1	552	404	1930	23.8	296	246
1921	46.2	667	510	1931	21.4	272	228
1922	32.1	403	300	1932	22.7	218	191
1923	32.7	411	269	1933	23.27	269	235.4

excessive had been greatly abated. Nearly three-quarters—1,805—of the tenements were single rooms only, and 145 of these were shared with one or more other families. But three families to a single room was the maximum number recorded, and there was a total number of 1,873 rooms for the families, about 1,700 in number, that inhabited them—an average of eleven rooms for every ten families.

This improvement in the standard of housing was made possible by a great fall in food prices, and by the growth of trade unionism and the stubborn resistance of workers to reductions of money wages; in consequence they were enabled to devote a larger proportion of their incomes to the payment of rent. The Bombay Inquiry of 1921-2 gave expenditure on food as 56.32 per cent of total expenditure, that on rent as 7.67 per cent. In 1932-3 the expenditure on food was only 46.6 per cent, that on rent had risen to 12.81 per cent. Moreover, out of the money spent on food,

that on rice and other cereals and pulses was considerably exceeded by that on such comparatively expensive foodstuffs as fish, meat, milk, ghee, vegetables, condiments, oil, sugar and tea (18·36 and 27·24 per cent respectively of total expenditure).

The city vital statistics show the effect of this process of deterioration in the condition of the workers during the war and boom years of high profits, and the recovery during the subsequent years of "depression." In the table opposite the "corrected infantile death-rate" is that calculated by making an allowance for deaths in the city of children born outside.

The decennial mean death-rate for 1907-16 was 38·58. The above figures show the following decennial averages:

1914-1923	Crude Death-rate	40·95
	Crude Infantile Death-rate	479·5
1924-1933	Crude Death-rate	25·0
	Crude Infantile Death-rate	314·4

The death-rate, if corrected for age distribution, would be much higher for all periods, especially for the war and post-war boom period.

CHAPTER III

FIRST DAYS IN MADRAS

My train landed me in Madras early in the morning, and after I had deposited my luggage in the Connemara Hotel and bathed and breakfasted, I went to the Senate House to report my arrival to the Registrar of the University. I found then that I had made a *faux pas* by halting at Bombay and Poona, because he had counted on my coming straight on, and had invited a little party to meet me at dinner on the evening of my expected arrival, and my telegram had come too late for him to put them off. I could only apologize half-heartedly, for I felt that those halts had been well advised.

I asked him what he could tell me about my duties. He told me that my salary would be paid me monthly, beginning from that day. He smiled when he said that it did not begin, as I had supposed, when I landed. Thus I was fined for my unintended courtesy. Then he said that I must join the Madras Club; after a probationary fortnight as an honorary member, Sir John Wallis, the Vice-Chancellor of the University, would put me up for election. Next I must, in order to keep fit, take regular exercise and play either tennis or golf. All this seemed sound enough, and I said I would follow his advice—but how about my work? To sign a cheque once a month and to play games for an hour a day would make my appointment a very cushy job, but that was not what I had come to India for. He considered for a while, and then suggested that I should consult Mr. Allen, the Principal of the Presidency College, the Rev. E. M. Macphail, the Principal of the Madras Christian College, and his colleague Mr. Corley. Accordingly I invited these three men to dinner at my hotel, and after much talk it was agreed that I should be invited to visit each of the two colleges once a week and take a class of selected students—those taking the B.A. examination in honours in History and Economics. I could not get any further suggestion from them; and two lectures a week seemed to me a very meagre return to the tax-payers of India who provided my salary. But Christmas having come, I contented myself with engaging a tutor in Tamil and buying a bicycle on which to explore the city.

The Madras Industrial Exhibition, 1915

My first objective was the "People's Park," where by Lord Pentland's initiative an exhibition of Indian industries was being held, with a programme of lectures. On my way there I came upon a big open-air meeting, and got near enough to listen. So far as I could see I was the only non-Indian in the crowd, and yet the speeches were in English, and were listened to attentively. The speakers were from the north, and had come to enlist support for the projected Hindu University at Benares, which has since been established. The fact that a miscellaneous audience of Madrasis could follow the speeches without difficulty made it easier for me to understand how it was that Madras could support four daily English newspapers (*the Madras Mail, Madras Times, The Hindu, and New India*) and only one Tamil one (*the Swadesimitram*, an abbreviated Tamil edition of *The Hindu*). Ability to read and write in the vernacular and in English are the Indian census tests of literacy, and by these India makes a very bad showing. If ability to speak and understand a second language were also tested, Madras would show far better results than London, and South India than England.

The Madras Department of Industries

The official guide to the Exhibition showed that one exhibit, in the charge of a Mr. Subrahmanyam Iyer, was contributed by the Government weaving parties, which travelled the Presidency to demonstrate to hand-loom weavers the merits of the fly shuttle and other improvements in equipment within their reach. The organization of these parties was one of the results of the Chatterton initiative which had survived Lord Morley's edict of 1910. That edict condemned the Madras policy of sympathetic Government co-operation with Indian attempts to improve industrial technique as contrary to the sacred principle of *laissez-faire*, and stated that the Madras Government's practical proposals would not be sanctioned by the Secretary of State. It was the result of the success of a certain British firm centred in Madras, actuated by the dog in the manger spirit, in playing upon Lord Morley's adhesion to Adam Smith's economic theories and his ignorance of India. Thus balked in Madras, Chatterton betook himself to

Mysore, and entered the service of the Maharajah, where he was given a free hand. Social and economic conditions in Mysore gave relatively little scope, but Chatterton was knighted for his services to the Empire in doing in Mysore on a small scale the sort of work he was not allowed to do in Madras, and he had, in 1918, the final satisfaction of seeing his policy embodied in the report of the Indian Industrial Commission, and accepted at least in theory as the official policy of the Indian Empire.*

Lord Morley's condemnation did not apply to purely educational activities by which the Madras Government did nothing that could conceivably be undertaken by profit-seeking firms, and so the peripatetic weaving parties were allowed to continue. Further, Chatterton had already by 1911 successfully initiated the industry of manufacturing domestic utensils of aluminium, and the Government had handed over the factory as a going concern to an Indian limited liability company, which was carrying on a very useful and successful business. Though by Lord Morley's principles this ought never to have been allowed, having been done it could not be undone. Chatterton's well-boring department was also allowed to continue in being; it had a small staff of experts and the necessary plant for sinking wells which was at the disposal of landholders who were willing to pay the cost price of having wells sunk on their land. Moreover other provincial governments were allowed to institute similar work, and escape censure by putting it under the authority of their Directors of Agriculture. When Lord Pentland, who had previously been Secretary of State for Scotland, arrived in Madras as Governor in October 1912, he saved as much as possible out of the wreck of the Madras Department of Industries, and the Exhibition in December 1915 was inspired by the same motives.

When I entered the grounds, I enquired for "Mr. Iyer." "Which Mr. Iyer?" I was asked. I had not realized that there were hundreds of Iyers in Madras, that being the most usual caste name of Tamil Saivite Brahmins. I looked at the official guide again, and said "Mr. Subrahmanyam Iyer"—but that again was far from a sufficient identification, Subrahmanyam Iyers were too numerous, the preceding initials had also to be supplied.

* Appendix I to that report gives a summary of what was accomplished by the Madras Department of Industries under Chatterton.

Feeling that any effective study of Indian economics must begin in the villages, I wanted to get permission to accompany one of the weaving parties, see it at work, see also as much as possible of the life of the village weavers and of their neighbours, with the help of the instructor as an interpreter. Unfortunately Mr. Subrahmanyam Iyer would give no encouragement to that idea, and it was never carried out.

Sir Frederick Nicholson

Leaving him I found my way to the room where Sir Frederick Nicholson, a retired member of the I.C.S., was announced to lecture on the prospects of soap manufacture in India. Nicholson was the G.O.M. of the Madras service. Long before—I do not know the date—he had been put on special service to ascertain how it was that the Japanese rice growers get bigger crops than the Indians. I have never seen his report, but from talk in Madras I gathered that he found Japanese (and Chinese) superiority depended on single transplantation, and the saving and utilizing of human excrement. In the deltaic lowlands of the Madras Presidency, rice usually is not sown broadcast, but as soon as the beginning of the rains makes irrigation possible seed beds are prepared on which the seed is sown thickly, to grow while the rest of irrigable land is being ploughed, manured, and converted into the slush which suits rice. When the young plants have grown to about a foot they are transplanted by women, a little handful of four or five being put into each hole. The Madras Agricultural Department did not venture on the advocacy of the use of night soil for manure, that would have outraged Indian sentiment,* but after testing the matter experimentally entered upon a campaign of propaganda for the thinner sowing of seed beds, and transplanting the young plants singly—one in each hole. Those cultivators who tried this method found that the Department was right in its contentions, three-quarters of the seed was saved, and the crops were bigger. Nevertheless the practice spread very slowly. Tamil coolie women are no more ready than English char-ladies to welcome instructions to change their methods of

* The Chinese peasant, on the other hand, it is said, considers that it would be an impiety showing gross ingratitude to fail to return to the Earth Goddess as manure what she has given as food.

doing what they have been doing all their working lives, which necessarily convey the suggestion that they do not know their own business properly and must be taught by outsiders; the cultivators, therefore, who were converted by seeing the Department's demonstration plots found the cost of transplantation increased, the work being done slowly and badly, and requiring much more supervision. When I left Madras single transplantation was still the exception in spite of its proved and acknowledged superiority.

Later, Nicholson was again put on special duty, this time to enquire into methods of combatting rural indebtedness, which is one of the great economic evils which afflict India, and in 1894 his report, which marks an epoch in Indian administration, was published. It urged active encouragement of village credit banks after the plan originated in Germany by Raiffeisen, pointing out not only what had thus been achieved in Europe, but also the fact that the *nidhis* and *chitfunds* of native growth, very popular and numerous in the southern districts, were crude forms of rural credit banks, indicating that India was ready to respond to the Raiffeisen idea. Within the exceptionally short period of ten years the Government of India was converted, and the Act of 1904 was passed which authorized the appointment by the provincial governments of Registrars of Co-operative Societies whose duty should be to preach co-operative credit, frame model rules for societies, and audit their accounts. That the Indian Government should have followed the lead of the "Benighted Presidency" at so short an interval was due in part to the extreme urgency of the problem of rural indebtedness and the general failure of previous efforts to cope with it, and partly to the fact that one or two official enquirers in other provinces shortly after Nicholson came to conclusions similar to his. When the United Provinces of Oudh and Agra echoed the voice of Madras there was a chance than Simla would hear.

After retirement from the Indian Civil Service Nicholson went to live at Coonoor, in the Nilgiris, where he was in my time of service in Madras reckoned as one of the "Coonoor Octogenarians," a group of retired officials, business men and missionaries, all over eighty, famous for their skill at Badminton and continued ability to play an effective game of tennis, and their readiness at need

to come down to the plains to meet an emergency or fill a gap. Much of Nicholson's time was spent on the West Coast, where he was specially concerned with the problems of the fisher folk, for whose benefit he devised, *inter alia*, schemes for co-operative tinning of the sardines caught there in great abundance, most of which were used as manure, and manufacture of fish-oil soap, which is specially valuable for use against blight and parasites on fruit trees.

Soap

In his lecture in the Madras Exhibition, Nicholson dealt with the great abundance of vegetable oils available in India for soap manufacture, the available supplies of alkalis, and the extent and potentiality of the Indian market. He pointed out that the small 5 per cent import duty, though imposed for revenue, also gave protection to Indian manufacture. The industry could be organized on a small scale, with very little expert assistance, employing primitive methods which could be learnt easily enough by villagers. The product would be inferior, because the by-product, glycerine, would not be eliminated, but it would be cheap, and better than the substitutes for soap generally available. Alternatively, the scientific manufacture could be started under experts, with a moderate capital, producing good qualities. His aim was, I believe, to get the former industry started on the West Coast under his own supervision, and to induce the truncated and hampered Department of Industries to get the latter started in Madras. What could that Department do under the Secretary of State's ruling? It could get people to lecture on soap, which would be futile; it could give young men scholarships to go to England to study soap manufacture, which would be worse than futile, as they would not have the capital to start themselves, and would be unable to convince Indian capitalists that they could run the business successfully—young men who had received similar scholarships bitterly regretted having accepted them. It could not do the one effective thing—make the experiment itself, however great the prospects of success and the benefits to be hoped for. Actually, as there was still a young chemist left in the department, chiefly employed in acting as an adviser to Indian dyers who had recently taken up the use of synthetic dyes, and who had great

difficulty during the war in getting supplies, he was entrusted with the task of finding out if anything could be done in the matter of soap by the Madras Government.

I got a little further light on the soap question shortly afterwards. I called on the young engineer who, when Chatterton left, was given charge of what remained of the department, with, as I suppose, the supervision of the well-boring work as his main task. I found him thoroughly disgruntled, bored and very depressed; and the only thing I could think of to cheer him up was to invite him to dine with me in the Madras Club. I thought it might do him good to let himself go, and rail at fate or the world or Governments to a new and sympathetic listener. He not only accepted, but told me that Chatterton was coming to Madras, and offered to invite him also on my behalf. The little party duly came off, with the above-mentioned chemist as our fourth. My three guests talked, I listened. I learnt that Chatterton also had a scheme on foot for soap manufacture on behalf of Mysore State. The rival merits of the three enterprises were canvassed; Nicholson's scheme for turning out a crude product was dismissed with slight respect; and it was agreed that the crux of the problem of making a commercial success was the finding of a market for the by-product, glycerine. I made a mental note of that for use in future lectures on elementary economics, to illustrate a warning to beginners against supposing that any real knowledge could be got out of text-books alone, not supplemented by field study. Sweeping statements like the familiar one that the factors of production are land, labour, capital and organization, may, in Whitman's phrase, "prove very well in the lecture room," but are of no use to the intending producer, whose job it is to find out what are the factors which he will have to control and combine.

Chatterton turned to me and asked how long I had been in India, and what so far I had learnt. I said, "I have learnt that there are two sorts of people in India; there are the I.C.S., and there are the—" I paused for the word, and Chatterton supplied it, "The Also Rans." The others nodded in agreement, grimly, I thought. The I.C.S. are the aristocracy of India; the fact that on retirement they are all entitled to the same pension, irrespective of the final positions and salaries to which they have risen, makes

them a sort of peerage, enjoying equality of status among themselves, and superiority to other services, not by right of birth, though they are nicknamed "The Heaven Born," but by what men in the other services regard as equally irrelevant, success in competitive examination in school subjects.

I remember little more about the Exhibition except a general impression that it showed very little prospect of any rapid progress in industry by Indian enterprise without outside help. By far the most meritorious exhibit was that sent in by Messrs. Binny & Company of the products of the Buckingham and Carnatic Cotton Mills, managed by Scots, with Lancashire men in charge of the spinning and weaving departments, and Leeds graduates for dyeing and finishing.

CHAPTER IV

THE GEOGRAPHY OF MADRAS CITY

I SPENT the last days of the year chiefly in exploring the city on my bicycle. I tried also to explore the environs, but outside the city boundaries the roads generally became mere tracks for ox-wagons, and I could not go far inland. But the city itself spreads over a great area; with only half the population of Bombay or Calcutta it has a far greater road mileage than either—which makes the financing of municipal services a difficult matter.

When Francis Day, in 1640, persuaded the East India Company to choose Madras as the site of its factory, one of his arguments was that there was a natural harbour capable at all times of taking ships up to fifty tons burden. This, no doubt, was the mouth of the River Cooum, on the north side of which Fort St. George stands. The Cooum is one of the channels by which the River Palar reaches the sea; its mouth has long since been silted up, and until the present purely artificial harbour was opened for traffic in 1912 goods and passengers had to be landed on the open beach by means of surf boats. A good many of these were to be seen lying on the beach while I was in Madras—they may, so far as I know, be there still—boats, at a guess, about 20 feet long, rather broad and deep, made of narrow planks pierced along the edges by round holes, and sewn together with coconut fibre passing through those holes.

A broad road runs northward from the Fort, passing the gates of the new harbour, a central artery for George Town, the “Black Town” of John Company days. The principal streets of that quarter also run north and south, parallel to the shore, with narrower connecting ones running east and west. It struck me that this lay-out was unfortunate, as tending to shut out sea breezes unnecessarily.

To the south the city extends to the banks of the Adyar, another channel of the Palar, which like the Cooum is shut off from the sea by a bar except when it bursts through at the height of the monsoon rains. All along the coast there is a steady drift northwards of the detritus brought down by the rivers, the pre-

vailing winds being from the south. This is shown in a very striking way in Madras, because after the building of the harbour its walls stopped the further drift northwards, and many acres of sand and shingle were added to the city area, while north of the harbour the suction of the currents necessitated the protection of the shore, and compelled certain fishing hamlets to retreat from the beach.

The Cooum winds through Madras in wide loops. Buffaloes graze on its banks, and immerse themselves in its water, apparently dreaming away the time in much content. They are sluggish, ungainly beasts. According to legend, they were not included in the original scheme of creation; but after God had finished, Adam begged to be allowed to try his hand, and produced the buffalo. When he saw it he said to God, "Perhaps I had better not try any more," and God said, "I think so too." Dhobis also wash their clothes in the Cooum, and mosquitoes, both the anopheles which carry malaria, and other sorts, breed in it. I believe it is also well stocked with larvacidal fish, but there are harbours of refuge for the larvae along the edges, spots where the level of the river, falling slightly during the dry season, leaves little pools behind, as Mr. Tirunarayanan showed me on the occasion mentioned above.

The area between the Cooum and the Adyar contains the ancient trading port of Meliapuram, now called Mylapore, which carried on the export trade in printed cotton cloth, with elaborate pictures of scenes from the Indian epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, to Further India and the East Indian Islands, which made Day report that here was the best market for the purchase of "pictures." A little farther south is the old Portuguese settlement of San Thomé, called after the apostle Thomas "the Doubter," who, according to tradition, founded the Indian Christian Church, and was martyred at St. Thomas's Mount, a little to the south of Madras. At the centre of this part of Madras is the crowded little town of Triplicane; there are also within the City boundaries rice fields and coconut groves, and at least one weaving village where the workers can be seen making their warps along the roadside, walking forwards and backwards along rows of sticks set upright in the earth; also many "parcherics," settlements of Paraiyans (Pariahs), collections of huts constructed according to

ancient practice of sticks with palm leaves (coconut here, palmyra in drier and inland areas) woven in between them. The very word for "build" in Tamil is "kattu," which properly means "tie," from which we get the word catamaran.

Along the shore also there is a series of fishing hamlets, the huts composing them being similarly constructed. The fishing is by means of seine nets, manipulated by men on catamarans, which are made by laying three or four wooden beams side by side and roping them together so as to make long narrow rafts. Boys of the fishing caste, a gay and sportive set of urchins, early acquire the art of balancing themselves on them, and not getting upset in a sea which abounds in sharks and very poisonous water snakes. On one occasion I watched a boy standing up on one of these catamarans, naked except for loin cloth and turban, unwind the latter, hold down one end with his feet, hold the other end above his head, and so sail before the wind. When, on the other hand, the Adyar Boating Club holds its Sports, one of the events is to cross the river, a distance of about thirty yards, on a catamaran, and bring it back; few if any of the competitors succeed in doing this without falling in several times; the man who falls in least frequently commonly wins the race. On another occasion I watched with my wife fishermen pulling their net on to the beach. They warned us not to come near and handled the net very cautiously in emptying it. There were several snakes in the catch, and the task of seizing them one at a time by the neck and dashing them on the sand to dislocate their backbones was allotted to a boy, on the assumption, as I suppose, that if he were bitten the loss of his life would matter less than that of a man. Fish caught during the night is carried in baskets on the heads of men who run with it to market, where it is available for sale early in the morning, in time to be cooked for breakfast on a European table. West Coast Indians living in Madras have but a poor opinion of the fish they get there, but to one who has only been accustomed to what passes through Billingsgate it seems excellent—delicious even.

A backwater of the Cooum borders Fort St. George on the west, and with the main stream embraces a level stretch of land covered with coarse herbage and but a few trees, apt to be slightly submerged when the water in the Cooum is at its maximum just

before the bursting of the bar. Here the Gymkhana Club has its club-house, a football ground and a nine-hole golf course. The football played is almost exclusively Association, Rugby being confined to the month of August. Indians do not play it, or at least South Indians did not in my time, though they took up "Soccer" and hockey with zest, as well as cricket and tennis. On its other side the golf course is bounded by the beginning of the splendid highway of Mount Road, a broad, straight carriage-way separated on each side by rows of shade trees from proportionately broad footways. It runs for seven miles to the steep St. Thomas's Mount, an isolated hill of granitic rock, which the tourist ascends with the help of steps to the Roman Catholic Church and Convent at the top, stone memorials of the Portuguese period, which has also left behind it the living memorial of a large and vigorous Roman Church, still steadily growing both by natural increase and by conversion.

Soon after Lord Willingdon came to Madras as Governor it was decided to widen the bridge which carries Mount Road across the Cooum, in order to link up the tram-lines of north and west Madras with those of the southern area. The carrying out of this scheme was marked by a curious tragedy. There was a belief among some of the people—perhaps those who had migrated from backward villages in search of work—that to give permanence to the new structure the Government would have to sacrifice a boy, just as, for example, the builder of Jericho in the time of King David laid the foundations of the wall in his eldest son, and set up the gates in his youngest. A Government House servant was seen taking a stroll through George Town carrying his own son, and the onlookers, imagining that he had kidnapped the boy for the sacrifice, rushed at him so suddenly that he could not explain, and killed him.

I was myself concerned in another incident in connection with the same work, this time a comic one, but equally instructive. I was lecturing to a class for the University Diploma in Economics on the relation between wages and industrial efficiency, and to illustrate it I gave them statistics showing that the cost of brick-laying by American methods paying American wages, perhaps the highest in the world, was actually lower than in India, paying Indian wages, among the lowest in the world. I described how,

the evening before, I had stood on the Cooum bridge, looking over the parapet at the building of the pier for the extension, and timing the rate at which bricks were laid. The pier was then breast-high; a cart brought a load of bricks and dumped them on the ground about twenty yards away. Two women coolies were acting as bricklayers' labourers; they went to the heap, picked up one or two bricks, put them on their heads, and walked, slowly and gracefully, and dropped them on the ground near the feet of the bricklayers, who in due course picked them up, and laid them in the cement. If I remember rightly I found that the rate for the four workers together was one brick per minute. I suggested that it might be worth while for the Public Works Department to look into the question of the possible improvement of building methods, for the advantage both of its manual workers and of tax-payers. Somehow or other these observations came to the ear of the Chief Engineer and he told me the result with great glee. He had that footpath strewn with prickly pear, so that all pedestrians should be compelled to use the one on the other side of the bridge, and so be prevented from timing the laying of bricks. He thought this was extremely clever!

A pleasant road bordering on the grounds of Government House runs along the bank of the Cooum opposite the Gymkhana Club to the next bridge beside the bar, to join the broad road that skirts the shore, the "Marina," a favourite evening resort for the carriage folk of Madras. Motor-cars there soon became more numerous than horsed carriages, but there were always to be seen one or two of the horse-drawn shuttered boxes, something like small police vans, in which Mohammedan ladies were allowed to take the air with no possibility of being seen. Nothing intervened between the promenade and the sea except the beach, the fishing hamlets mentioned above, and what the gharri men call "Fish College," otherwise the Marine Biological Station, which is attractive on account of the vivid colours and weird shapes of tropical fish kept in the tanks. The University Senate House, the Presidency College, and Queen Mary's College (the Presidency College for women) all stand along the Marina, looking across to the sea. Not far behind them is the Buckingham Canal, which comes up to Madras from the south, passing an ancient deserted city known as "The Seven Pagodas," which possesses

famous rock sculptures. The canal has to cross a succession of rivers, among them the Adyar and Cooum, which makes its maintenance expensive, so that there is some annual loss on its working. It was originally constructed as a Famine Work, and its chief use is to bring supplies of the casuarina wood, the favourite fuel, to Madras householders.

The Casuarina is a larch-like tree introduced from Japan, occasionally to be seen in Bengal and some other parts of India as well as in Madras, growing to its full size mixed with other trees in avenues. But it is only in Madras Presidency, so far as I know, that much use has been made of it. Either the Forestry or the Agricultural Department set the example of forming plantations on barren sandy land, and many private people imitated the example. If the young trees are cut down after seven years, the average quantity of good saleable fuel obtained is about thirty-five tons per acre, showing a yield of about five tons per acre per annum. The Australian blue gum tree (eucalyptus), which grows luxuriantly on the Nilgiri and Palni hills, with its bare straight masts of trunks, is said to yield about twelve tons per annum per acre, but ordinary native forest over most of Madras Presidency only about half a ton. Casuarina, moreover, has a further merit. A Casuarina plantation leaves a brown carpet on the ground, like that of "pine needles" in our own fir plantations, which supplies a sponge-like humus to the sandy soil below and makes it fertile.

Population is thick beside the part of the course of the Buckingham Canal between the Adyar and the Cooum, and its water there is naturally foul, very foul. But this, according to my friend Mr. Tirunarayanan, has its compensating advantages; it is too foul for the anopheles, and they will not breed there, though mosquitoes which do not carry malaria do so abundantly. As this part of the canal is so close to the sea, I wondered whether it would not be practicable to set up a windmill by the Marina, where there is always a wind blowing, to pump a steady stream of sea water into it, which would not allow mosquitoes of any variety to breed. As there are lock gates at both ends, the water is almost completely stagnant.

The two big Madras cotton-mills are on the landward side of Madras, and depend on the railway for transport. On that side also is the Choolai Mill, a smaller, but also a very profitable con-

cern—at least in my time it was paying very big dividends. It was owned and managed by Indians from the Bombay side; it did not do any weaving, but spun yarn and sold it to hand-loom weavers through middle-men. To illustrate the economic theory that under competition price tends to approximate to the marginal cost of production, I set my students once the task of explaining what was a puzzle to me, viz. how it was that nobody had ventured on starting a new cotton-mill in Madras, seeing that the three existing ones had for many years been making very big profits. A year or two afterwards a company was formed in Madras to build a new mill; it was to be called the Willingdon Mill, but I believe the project never reached the bricks and mortar stage.

For Europeans the chief shopping centre is the part of Mount Road nearest the entrance to Government House, and there is the one hotel which in my time had bath rooms and sanitary arrangements on the European plan. It was founded by a retired Government House cook, and called D'Angeli's after him. The two biggest hotels, Spencer's Hotel and the Connemara Hotel, were about a mile away along Mount Road. They belonged to the firm Spencer & Co., wholesale merchants, retailers of all sorts of European goods, hotel-keepers and refreshment caterers all over the Presidency, the firm's central shop adjoining the two hotels. On the opposite side of Mount Road a short avenue leads to Madras Club, which boasted of having the longest bar in the East. The bar-room is a large, lofty room, or rather hall, on the ground-floor, with the ordinary Indian look of having round it more open door and window than wall. It is for men only; women are limited to the Ladies' Annexe, a separate building. Tradition says that when the Club was first started, the Committee, proud of their arrangements, invited a notable housewife, a Scotswoman, to inspect it. She did so with perfect thoroughness, and in equally complete silence. When at last she went, she opened her mouth at parting to say, "If that is the best you can do, I am sorry for you." They then and there swore an oath that no woman should ever again cross the threshold. That oath was kept, except of course for the low-caste sweeper women who come in daily with little bundles of palmyra frond stalks and stir up the dust, until the evening of the day after the Armistice, when the Club members raided the Annexe, carried off the ladies there like the Sabine

maidens of old, hoisted them over the bar counter and made them serve drinks.

The Club in its present habitat dates, I believe, from "John Company" time, but there I may be wrong. I do not know whether any Indian has ever been admitted to membership, but I think not. Some time about the end of last century a move was made to establish a club in which Europeans and Indians could mix on equal terms, and which, it was hoped, they would join in equal numbers. The club-house was built, and the club started, with very influential backing, as "The Cosmopolitan." But in the evening, after the day's work is over, men need to relax in the company of their own kind; and while I was in Madras the Cosmopolitan was flourishing, but its membership was exclusively Indian. On one occasion I received and accepted an invitation from a member to dine with him there, but he gave me an ordinary European dinner, and I met none of the other members.

CHAPTER V

MAKING CONTACTS

CHRISTMAS past and the New Year (1916) come, I felt that it was time to make a new move. I called on Sir John Wallis, and talked over my problem with him. My colleague, Mr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, the Professor of Indian History, had been given rooms in an otherwise unoccupied bungalow, situated in an ill-cared for "compound," i.e. large garden, and the services of a peon; there I found him contentedly at work on records of old inscriptions, from which he was extracting new light on the history of old South Indian dynasties. The Syndicate of the University had offered me other rooms in the same building, I looked at them and did not like them. They also offered me a peon, I asked for a shorthand typist instead, and this was granted some time afterwards. The Director of Public Instruction, Mr. (Sir) Henry Stone, moreover, offered me the use of a room in The Old College, Nungumbaukum, which had ceased to be used as a college, and in which he had his offices. This I occupied till arrangements were made for me in the Senate House. Sir John Wallis listened very sympathetically and comprehendingly to all I had to say, and in reply to my final question, "What am I to do?" answered, "You have to make a success of your job." I thanked him very sincerely, for I understood rightly that he meant that if I made my own plans, he would help me as far as possible to carry them out. He further recommended me to talk over my plans with Mark Hunter, Professor of English in the Presidency College, and a very influential member of the Syndicate.

I resolved that as the University had not taken the customary step of asking me to deliver a public inaugural lecture of its own accord, I would force its hand, and make it go one better. I went back to Sir John next morning, and said, "I want to give a course of six public inaugural lectures in the Senate House, and I want you to ask the Governor to preside at the first one." He agreed immediately, and Lord Pentland acceded to the request with great cordiality.

The first lecture was given in the great hall used for the con-

ferring of degrees Open window-door spaces and the breeze blowing in from the sea kept the air cool and fresh, but also made the acoustics difficult Some hundreds of students were present, and listened very attentively, so far as I could see; but one of the Madras papers reported that they had difficulty in following what I said, partly on account of the unfamiliarity of my accent. They had no such difficulty in listening to Lord Pentland

The succeeding five lectures were given in the upstairs chamber used for Senate meetings, a large room, very comfortably furnished, beautifully light and airy Lord Pentland's backing, and the full reports of the first lecture in all the Madras papers, brought me a distinguished audience, including several heads of departments I have no record of what I said, and only the vaguest memory What I do remember very clearly is in what spirit I framed my discourses I meant to enjoy the luxury of plain speaking I had no intention of keeping off politics; I determined to be equally candid in my criticism of the Government of India, on the one hand, for lack of zeal and enterprise in the promotion of economic welfare, and of politicians of the Opposition on the other, for choosing the wrong points for attack I looked forward to getting into abundant hot water on both accounts, but saw no reason why I should care, nor was I much worried even by the consideration that I was pretty sure to make mistakes and expose my ignorance, since to utter my hastily formed opinions in public lectures followed by open discussion was the best way of getting them corrected I was astonished to find that all my strictures were received on both sides in the most friendly fashion On the one side, subsequent observation convinced me that what Indians want most from "Europeans" is candour and plain speaking; on the other, that I was unsuspectingly expressing more or less what official Madras thought, and saying openly what it had been saying in private despatches to Simla and Downing Street For example, in a letter home dated January 14, 1916, I wrote, "There are certain things India wants badly—improved cattle is one thing, more wood another, and I propose to bombard the departments till these get recognized" I only learnt later that the casuarina which the Madras Government had introduced supplied the city with the greater part of its fuel; and that Mr E. W Sampson, of the Madras Agricultural Department, had already carried

through a thorough investigation into the cattle problem; that at the Madras Agricultural College at Coimbatore cattle-breeding was being carried on, and Lord Pentland and his advisers were wrestling with the problem of finding out what further practical steps could be taken in view of the difficulties created, on one side by Indian veneration of the cow, and on the other by the restrictions on public enterprise imposed by the Home authorities.

Undue restrictions arose mainly from two causes. One was the persistent homage paid by the India Office to the ghosts of ancient economic theories; the other the ignorant self-sufficiency of subordinates in Government offices, to whom over-burdened heads of departments are often obliged to leave the responsibility of making decisions. Of this I came across an amusing example. In order to level up the efficiency of the Government printing works, the appointment of superintendent was offered to an experienced man in the Oxford University Press, with the sanction of the Secretary of State. The printer in question, having learnt that he would have charge of three different establishments, scattered over a distance of seven miles, stipulated to the Madras Government that a motor-car should be provided. That was promised, subject to the consent of the India Office, which it was assumed would be granted, and the printer sailed for India. But when the Secretary of State's answer came, it was that the car was not allowed; the printer must hire taxis. This was not an easy thing to do, seeing that there were in Madras no taxis to be hired. For sufficient reason, the superintendent did not choose to buy and run a car at his own expense, and he did his journeys on a pedal bicycle, having been an enthusiastic cyclist in his youth. It may be asked why the Madras Government did not give him an increment of salary sufficient to enable him to have a car; the answer is, I believe, that this also could not be done without prior consent from above. He told me that on one occasion when a fire broke out in one of the outlying establishments, the time lost through his having to go by bicycle instead of by car cost in extra damage more than the car would have cost up to date.

Even more hampering than such niggling interference was the special financial handicap from which Madras suffered. The average Madras income per head is certainly somewhat less than the average income for all India, and yet Madras had to remit

to the Central Government a larger share of the revenues extracted from its population than other provinces and got back less in grants. This was because the financial arrangements were made separately between the Central Government and each province; Bengal, the richest of all, paid least and received most, Calcutta being then the centre of the Viceroy's Government. One result of this was that Madras was compelled to force up its drink revenue to the utmost. It granted licenses for sale for single years only, and sold the licenses by auction; palm trees were numbered and registered and subject to tax, the fermented juice of palms (toddy) being the alcoholic drink ordinarily consumed. "Maximum revenue and minimum consumption" was the Government's avowed object, the upward limit of the rate of tax being the point at which illicit consumption would get out of hand, in which case drinking would increase, and the revenue fall off. As nearly all the toddy-drinkers are of the depressed castes, it was possible to carry on this policy without provoking influential opposition.

I remember little of the discussions that followed those lectures. On one occasion Dr. T. M. Nair challenged me to say whether the relative inefficiency of Indian labour was not largely a matter of diet, a question on which he was obviously much better informed than I was. I gave the non-committal reply that I was not a fanatical believer in vegetarianism. Dr. Nair was an M.D. of Edinburgh; he had done notable work on the Commission on Indian Factory Labour (1908) and his Minority Report, which strongly protested against the weakness of the Majority proposals, was adopted as the basis of the Indian Factory Act of 1911. Later he came into prominence as the organizer of the Non-Brahmin party, and the founder of its organ *Justice*, a daily newspaper. In the first election to the Madras Legislative Council under the Montford Reforms his party got a large majority; Dr. Nair declined office himself, but Lord Willingdon sought his advice in the selection of Ministers.

Another time I got a sudden flash of new light from Mr. W. B. (Sir Bernard) Hunter, Secretary and Manager of Madras Bank, who came to my lectures with his brother Mark. I had been speaking about the probable future of industries in India initiated by British enterprise, taking jute as the representative example. I argued that since the jute mills were owned and

operated by limited liability joint stock companies, of which the shares were chiefly bought and sold on the Calcutta Stock Exchange, it was inevitable that ownership and management should tend to pass gradually into Indian hands. Hunter replied that I was right so far as ownership was concerned; but that owing to the working of the Managing Agent system the management would continue to be, as then, in the hands of Dundee Scots, though Indians should acquire the greater part of the share capital.* This was the first I had ever heard of the Managing Agent system, but it was clear that if it could operate in such a way, it was a feature of great importance in Indian industry, and a matter to be investigated, though it had been completely ignored by all writers on Indian economics. That gap was left for Dr. P. S. Lokanathan to fill; the Managing Agent system is a main topic of his work *Industrial Organization in India*, published in 1935.

The reports of my lectures in the Madras papers had an immediate effect in bringing me into communication with people in the southern Tamil country, providing possibilities of contacts of which I was able to avail myself later. The Telugu country north of Madras did not show the same responsiveness.

I was a little apprehensive about my lectures in the Madras Colleges, as I was assured on all sides that Indian students were concerned only in getting degrees, and took no interest in the subjects of examinations for their own sakes, and neither I, nor the Principals of the Colleges, intended that my classes should have examination value. On the evening before my first lecture I took a stroll along the beach, picking up sea-shells and putting the most delicate and perfect in my pocket. By San Thomé, after the sun had set and when the light was fading, I passed a group of fishermen's huts, and a little troupe of small naked boys, as dark as negroes, came running out, calling out for backsheesh, and slapping their little round stomachs. I put my hand in my pocket, drew out a handful of shells, and threw them away. The boys all rushed to the spot where they fell, expecting to find coins; when they saw their mistake, they all burst out laughing and

* He was quite right. In *The Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India* (1934) Professor O. H. Buchanan writes of the jute industry, "While from half to two-thirds of the shares are now owned by Indians, almost no progress has been made towards taking over the management."

scampered away. When I saw that, I felt that the differences between English and Indian boys and youths were superficial, and that I need not worry about Indian University students, nor expect to find them less interested in the attainment of knowledge than those at home. As a matter of fact, I found them rather more openly responsive, resembling in that respect English working-class audiences.

It may be noted here that the Cantor Lectures delivered by Major-General Sir Robert McCarrison on February 10, 17 and 24, 1936, give valuable information about the nutritive value of the customary diets of different parts of India. That of the furthest North, e.g. of Pathans and Sikhs, wholemeal wheat with milk and milk products, and plenty of fresh vegetables and some meat, was the best, and, indeed, excellent; that of the rice-eating Madras the worst of all, except that of Travancore, where tapioca forms a large part of the ordinary food. Rats fed on the Madras diet, however, did not fare perceptibly worse than those fed on the customary diet of low-paid British urban workers, white bread, margarine, boiled potatoes and cabbage, tinned meat, tinned jam, tea with much sugar and little milk. The diet of the Mahrattas of the Deccan is good. But it must be remembered that in any part of India the food, whether good or bad in quality, is very frequently deficient in quantity.

CHAPTER VI

ERUVELLIPET, A DELTA VILLAGE

My first opportunity of seeing something of Indian village life came early in February. Through the Principal of the Madras Christian College I got an invitation from one of the senior students, Mr. E. V. Sundaram Reddi, to visit his native village, Eruvelli pet, in South Arcot, with him. He explained that there was a four-anna travellers' bungalow close to the village—a bungalow, that is, maintained by the Government for the use of touring officials and other travellers, where the charge for lodging and attendance was four annas (4d.) a day. Sundaram advised me to bring my "boy," and to buy a folding-bed and mattress, and bring them together with bedding; his "uncle" would send an ox-wagon to the station.

We took train to Villupuram, on the main line of the South Indian Railway, which is the route from Madras to Ceylon. Villupuram is the junction for Pondicherry, and the railway, which from Madras keeps some distance inland to avoid French territory, there turns eastward towards the coast, but the high-road beside it continues in the same direction, nearly due south. We left Madras in the evening after sunset, the train moved slowly and cautiously, since otherwise the relatively broad carriages on the narrow metre-track would be in danger of overturning. We arrived in the small hours of the morning, and had to wait till dawn for the ox-cart. The open space adjoining the station was spread with rugs, and on them lay the recumbent forms of intending passengers with their luggage, in family groups, prepared to wait contentedly for their trains for an indefinite time.

At daybreak we started. I had brought my bicycle with me, but that was an error of judgment. The road was being reconstructed by being built up some three feet above its previous level, so as to be high and dry in times of flood. There were gaps where I had to carry the bicycle, while the ox-cart negotiated them very cleverly. After about eight miles we came to the unbridged South Pennar river, a mile wide expanse of sand with a tiny trickle of water in the middle, and my companions persuaded me that the

only way by which I could get across was to put the bicycle in the cart and get in myself. I was sorry for the ox, but I was already quite hot enough and gave in. We passed Eruvelli pet and crossed another river, or rather another channel of the same river, the Malattar, to get to the travellers' bungalow.

It turned out to be a two-roomed building, of brick walls and tiled roof pleasantly situated in a little wood, beside an open well with sides overgrown with thick vegetation, out of which I saw a big snake glide, probably, as I was told afterwards from my description, a Russell's viper. When I went to bed the following night I looked at the low window by my side, barred but unglazed, and made up my mind not to put my foot out of bed in the dark, in case my neighbour the snake chose to sleep indoors.

My room had a brick floor, and for furniture a wooden table, two wooden chairs, a zinc bath, and an iron bedstead. There was one man in charge, who drew water, and gave my boy what other help was required. Having deposited me and my luggage, and given instructions for my comfort, Sundaram got in the cart, crossed the River Malattar again, and promising to come for me again in the cool of the evening, left me to bathe and eat, and rest through the heat of the day.

Thus I spent four days, mornings and evenings in Eruvelli pet and its neighbourhood, strolling round, talking with the villagers through my interpreter, examining the official records, and seeing what there was to be seen, and going back to the bungalow at noon and at night. We never ate together; once when my boy had made me a rice pudding I begged Sundaram to share it with me; he declined, and when my boy was out of hearing explained that he could not take food prepared by a servant who was probably a Panchama—an untouchable. Whether he was or not I did not know then; but afterwards I asked, "Tom, what caste are you?" and he answered proudly, "Parayan Caste, Sah." "Parayan" is our word "pariah"; their traditional caste occupation is said to be beating drums at weddings, funerals and other processions, but they numbered by the census of 1921, 2,409,000. Together with the kindred caste of the Pallans, who are slightly more numerous, they do most of the work on rice cultivation in the Carnatic plain from Madras to Cape Comorin, besides working in all sorts of capacities for European employers in Madras. I

have been told that whereas the Brahmin quarter of a town or village, the "agraharam," must be completely purified with cows' dung if a Parayan passes through, the same ceremony of purification is performed if a Brahmin passes through a parchery, but I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the statement. As for the rice pudding, I do not suppose that my friend Sundaram would have been so particular away from his own village.

The Village Husbandry

The village with its inhabitants seemed full of peace, carrying on its labours tranquilly, without any apparent hurry or worry. Rice-growing was the chief concern, occupying nearly half of the 1,139 acres which comprised the village area, out of which only 722 acres were officially reckoned as cultivable. The non-cultivable area consisted of the village site, the high-road, the tank (artificial lake) in which water was stored for irrigation, and the villagers' share of the bed of the Malattar. Both ploughing and harvesting were being carried on in the rice fields; some fields had already been cut, and were being got ready to grow a second crop, others were ready to cut or ripening for the harvest, with ears turning yellow, others still green and being fed with irrigation water. I watched the harvesting. While the green corn stood upright, the stalks of ripe grain were laid before the wind; the harvesters attacked the field on the windward side, armed with sickles shaped like our billhooks, with serrated edges on the inside of the curve. They squatted on their heels, grasped a bundle of stalks with the left hand, severed it close to the ground with a blow of the sickle, placed the bundle gently on the ground behind their backs, and shuffled forward an inch or two to repeat the operation. It was reckoned a day's labour for eight men to cut an acre. Women did the carrying. Picking up the little bundles of stalks very gently, they put them together in larger bundles and carried them to the threshing-floor, using the bunds between the plots of growing rice as footpaths. There they handed them over to the man in charge, who shook the loose grain on to one heap, and pitched the straw on to another, where it waited for its time to be spread over the threshing-floor, to have the remaining grain trodden out by oxen. The grain was so loose that the cut corn had to be handled very

carefully, or much would have been lost on the way to the threshing-floor.

The ploughing I saw was on land belonging to the Munsif, who is one of the two representatives of Government in the village, the other being the Karnam, or Kanakkan, the village accountant, who records births and deaths and reports them to the higher authorities, has charge of the village copies of official documents relating to properties in land and land revenue, and keeps a running census of the numbers of cattle, buffaloes, horses, donkeys, sheep and goats owned by the villagers. The Munsif has the higher status of a petty magistrate, empowered to deal with trifling cases within the village; his office is generally hereditary, but by custom, not by law. Both Munsif and Karnam receive small monthly honoraria from Government and a great deal depends on their efficiency and loyalty, and on their working harmoniously together.

To return to the Munsif's ploughing, on a plot between one and two acres in extent he had collected from his neighbours no less than sixteen ploughs, each with its team of two small, feeble oxen or buffaloes. The plot, like all in rice-growing lands, was surrounded by a bund, about eighteen inches high, to retain the water which had been turned on to it. Four of the teams were resting, the remaining twelve were wandering about in the mud in what seemed an aimless manner, drawing light ploughs after them. How light the ploughs used for wet land cultivation are may be guessed from the fact that I once saw a small, lightly built man walking through a street in Trichinopoly carrying two, one on each shoulder. It is the feet of the oxen rather than the ploughs they draw which chiefly do the work of churning up the mud and working in the green manure and ashes whereby the land is got ready for planting. Single transplantation was practised in Eruvelliipet.

To those who suffer from "the obsession of economics," and who consider the maximum of output of consumable goods the proper end of man, it may well seem deplorable that to cut and carry an acre of corn should be a day's work for eight men and four women, and that ploughing should be similarly dilatory, but in Eruvelliipet there was no reason for greater expedition that could appeal to the people. The period of pressure for the rice-

grower is not that of ploughing or harvesting, but that of transplantation, and when that was at its maximum Eruvelliipet was glad to draw in extra workers from a neighbouring weaving village. The population in 1911 was 1,150; during the three subsequent years there had been 122 births and 93 deaths, so the density of population of 650 per square mile, and 163 per hundred acres of cultivable land in a purely agricultural village was a good excuse, if not a sufficient reason, for spreading the work of tillage out thin.

Within the limits of its possibilities Eruvelliipet was creditably enterprising. It grew indigo till the synthetic dye made that crop unprofitable, then took up ground-nuts for export via Pondicherry to Marseilles, where the nuts yielded in successive pressings salad oil, raw material for margarine manufacture, and finally for soap. When the outbreak of the war stopped that export, it also cut off the supply of German dyes to India, and the villagers took up indigo again. The advice of the Agricultural Department was followed, not only in the matter of the single transplantation of paddy, but also in the planting of casuarina; and one of the oil engines recommended by Chatterton's well-boring department was at work when I was there, pumping water—at other times it was used to drive a sugar mill for crushing the cane. In 1885 two of the leading villagers formed a company with ryots of neighbouring villages and erected a sugar refinery, but they failed to get a license for the sale of arrack, the chief by-product, and another refinery was started at the same time only five miles away. In consequence the company had to be wound up in 1895, leaving the promoters heavily in debt. One of the two tall chimneys was still standing, the other had been pulled down to provide bricks for house-building.

Sugar-cane was being grown on thirteen acres of wet land at the time of my visit; gross returns up to Rs.400 had been realized on it in Eruvelliipet, but it is expensive to cultivate, occupies the land for rather more than a full year, and should not be grown on the same land more than once in four years. Ground-nut and certain millets combined well, giving a commercial crop and a food crop off the same land in the same year, but at a rather heavy cost for labour. The nuts have to be dug up when the ground is dry and hard, crow-bars being used, but such digging is an excellent

preparation for the sowing of millet directly the rains come, and ground-nut is also one of the leguminous plants which enrich the soil with nitrogen. The combination of ground-nut and ragi, I was told, at a maximum yielded a gross produce worth Rs.200 per annum per acre, but the ragi required some watering. Where this could not be managed kambu (spiked millet, called bajra in northern India) is preferred. Ground-nut seed of a superior variety had been introduced by the Agricultural Department from Mauritius, and was rapidly displacing the native variety.

Rice nevertheless was the mainstay of the life of the community, and rice depends on water. Eruvelli pet was well supplied provided the monsoon rains did not fail. It had a "tank," i.e. a storage reservoir, which gave a three months' supply to most of the wet land, water could be got abundantly at a very moderate depth by sinking wells, and in what was called a "spring channel" (a "leat" it would be called in Devonshire) a steady stream of clear water flowed through the village land—not, I fear, as innocent as it looked, for cholera was given as the cause of 32 out of the 93 deaths I found recorded.* The spring channel had its origin in the bed of the Malattar, in which there is always water flowing beneath the sand; every year it was choked by the detritus carried down when the river was in flood, and had to be dug out again by the combined labours of the villagers. The tank was fed by a longer and broader leat, called the "Reddi Channel," starting from the River Pennar, constructed to supply a number of villages, but between these the spirit of co-operation had failed, and for a number of years the channel had been choked. There were hopes that the Public Works Department would take its repair and maintenance in hand. The Reddi Channel, however, collected a very fair supply of water along its course during the monsoon.

What with the crops above-mentioned and vegetables and fruits of various kinds, the productiveness of the soil left little cause for adverse criticism of the efficiency of the village agriculture. It was otherwise with animal husbandry. By local estimate there were about 250 working oxen and buffaloes, 150 cows and she-buffaloes, 180 young animals of those species, about 100 goats, and some pigs. But I doubt if all the cows put together supplied as much milk for human consumption as one good English milch

* There were 35 deaths from "fevers," and 38 from unspecified causes.

cow, or two at most. The Madras Agricultural Department, to whom I applied afterwards for an estimate, calculated that only one Madras cow out of twenty would be supplying milk for human consumption at any particular time, and they put the average daily yield, according to my recollection, for those that were milked, at less than a pint a day. When I referred that estimate to my students they were unanimous in thinking that it was too pessimistic, but I think it must have been approximately correct for Eruvelliipet. It is a Tamil proverb that "the calf of the good cow dies"; if the cow gives enough milk to make it worth while to milk her, the owner takes it all, and lets the calf starve, otherwise the calf gets what milk there is and may survive. As the mating of bull and cow is also left to chance, it is not surprising that the cattle in the Tamil country are mostly miserable specimens, either as draught beasts or as milkers. Even to maintain the numbers of the working oxen it was necessary to import beasts from Mysore, the great cattle-breeding area for South India, which still owed something to Hyder Ali and Tippu Sahib for the excellence of its cattle. They realized that the efficiency of their armies depended on mobility, and the mobility of their infantry and artillery on the beasts that drew the baggage wagons and field guns, they therefore maintained great breeding establishments. For carriage of goods to Villupuram these imported cattle were indispensable.

Of the 722 acres of cultivable land, 542 were classified as "wet," being completely irrigable by water from the tank or spring channel. These wet lands paid Rs.2,694.11.0 as "kist" (land revenue), an average of 6s. 5½d. per acre. The remaining 180 acres of "dry" land, dependent on rainfall, or on wells sunk by the ryots, paid Rs.247.14.0, averaging 1s. 10d. per acre. There is a meaningless controversy which becomes acute when resettlement is on, as to whether the "kist" is a "tax" or a "rent," both categories being left undefined. Actually it can best be described as a "chief rent" or "quit rent." It is charged on the land, graded elaborately according to soil and irrigation facilities, irrespective of changes of occupation, and its historical basis is the revenue system of the Governments in each area which the East India Company superseded. The ancient rule in South India was that in time of peace the revenue should be one-sixth of the *gross*

produce of the soil, in time of war one-fourth. The rule of the Imperial Government was that in no case may it be more than half the *net* produce, but in the calculation of the net produce many things had to be taken into consideration which made the actual payment much less than the theoretical maximum. In 1915 and 1916 an investigation was being carried on into the proportion of the revenue to the rents paid when land was sublet, as ascertained by registered agreements, and it was found to be one-fifth on the average. Judging from my own observation, I should think that estimate was pretty accurate. I seized every opportunity that occurred of asking ryots what they paid as kist, and what they got or could get if they let the land, and usually they put the rent at more than five times the kist. In Eruvelliipet the rents paid went up to a maximum of Rs.40 (53s. 4d.) per acre.

As for the proportion between land revenue and gross produce, before I left Madras, with the assistance of the Agricultural Department I made an estimate for Madras Presidency of the money value of the agricultural produce available for human consumption in the villages or for sale outside them in the year 1919-20, at current prices realizable in the place of production. The kist came to just 2 per cent of the total. It was a good harvest year, and prices were enhanced by the monsoon failure of the year before, so the percentage was unusually low. During my time in Madras it might have averaged 4 or even 5 per cent of the gross produce. But always the "surplus value" extracted from the produce of labour for the maintenance of Government services in India is a small matter as compared with what goes into the pockets of moneylenders.

Homes and Temples

Hitherto I have used the word "village" to signify the organized community of Eruvelliipet and the land belonging to it. In the other sense of a collection of dwellings it was not one village but two. On the west side of the high-road was the caste village, consisting of two parallel streets running east and west with a short connecting street at the far end. The streets were kept clean, and were as well paved as the traffic required. Some of the houses

were of brick, some of mud, like Devonshire "cob,"* some tiled and some thatched. Many of them had porches with little niches in which lighted lamps were put after sunset. All but one were of one storey only. Sundaram's house, a typical better-class one, was in the form of a quadrangle with a well in the central area. This is a favourite house-plan in South India, where, although there is no custom of purdah among the Hindus, the women generally prefer to keep aloof from men outside their own families.

The single two-storied house belonged to Sundaram's "uncle." It stood a little back from the street and had a tiled approach under glass, with ornamental iron gates and pillars adorned with paintings. One evening Sundaram invited me there for a concert, the owner being absent in Madras. The music was supplied by an excellent gramophone, rendering Telugu solos, till the last item, which was an English music-hall song. I made him stop that immediately, it was intolerable after the delicate Indian music. I asked Sundaram whether the "uncle" was his father's or his mother's brother. He said neither, they were related in two ways, the more direct being that he was uncle by marriage to the daughter of a first cousin on the father's side of Sundaram's maternal uncle. It seems to me that the essence of the relationship, which was close enough for Sundaram to be able to requisition any of his relative's property not needed for other use, was that they were neighbours and fellow-caste men, both being Reddis. The Reddis are an important cultivating caste of the Telugu country north of Madras, from whom the armies of the Andhra Empire of Vijayanagar were largely recruited. That empire was destroyed by the Mohammedans in the middle of the sixteenth century, but it was dominant in South India when the Portuguese first landed, having displaced the Chola kings of the Tamil country; a country which then was ruled through subsidiary chieftains known as "Poligars," of whom the most famous is Tirumalai Naik of Madura. The descendants of these Poligars, some of them now Zemindars enjoying the privilege of permanent settlement, remain in the conquered territory to this day, as do also the descendants

* This is quite a good method of construction, I was told, provided the roof is kept in good repair and the eaves overhang the walls enough to protect them from the monsoon rains, but not otherwise. Mud and thatch give a cooler house than brick and tiles.

of their Reddi followers. Eruvelliipet is a Tamil village, but the Reddi families there continued to use Telugu in their own homes, though Tamil is near enough akin for them to learn it without difficulty. The Reddis in the Tamil country are generally taller, fairer, and in appearance more robust than their neighbours.

Within the caste village there were nearly all the urban elements necessary for a practically self-sufficing community. Bricks and tiles were manufactured, and wagons built out of local materials; there were carpenters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, potters and washermen, temples and priests, and a school with 67 boys and 7 girls on the roll—but I fear the average attendance was much smaller and the teaching, by the three masters, very inefficient; the head master was also in charge of the village post office. The dhobis did the village laundry work in the spring channel, which probably also supplied drinking water as well as irrigation water to various villages. One of them was pointed out to me as the notably thrifty man of the village. Like Longfellow's blacksmith, he owed nothing to anybody, and was reputed to have Rs. 1,000 saved. The potters had the exclusive right to collect cattle dung from the channel of the Malattar for fuel. The one important village industry not represented was weaving. The Eruvelliipet school was maintained by Government grants; in a neighbouring village I found one entirely maintained by the villagers themselves.

The religious needs of the villagers were adequately met. In an open space between the village and the road stood a great stone *lingam*, a representation of the male organ of reproduction, the symbol of Siva; close by, a temporary dwelling for Siva himself, and a new temple in course of building. At the opposite end of the village stood a temple to Ganesa, the "Belly God" of wealth and prosperity, the eldest of Siva's sons. He has an elephant head, which he obtained in the following way. His mother, Parvati, desiring quiet rest, posted him outside her door and charged him to allow no one to enter. Siva happened to want to see her, and when Ganesa barred his entry, he drew his sword and cut off the boy's head. Parvati rushed out and told Siva whom he had killed. Siva handed over his sword to a servant and bade him run out quickly and cut off and bring the first head he came to, and that happened to be an elephant's. Siva put it on Ganesa's shoulders and it grew there, and only when it was too late did he bethink

himself that he might instead have put Ganesa's own head back again.

Ganesa also had his car, in which he was carried in procession round the village with great rejoicing on his birthday, which is called *Vinayaga Chaturti*. *Vinayaga* is, I believe, another name or title of Ganesa, *Chaturtis* occur twice every lunar month, the fourth day after every new moon and full moon. But whether all these are Ganesa festivals, or only one a year, and if the latter when it comes, are questions to which I have forgotten the answers, if indeed I ever got them. The goddess Poniamman, a local variant of Kali, also had a car for the same purpose. Her festival, called *Tirunal*, lasted for ten days, and took place in May, the hottest time of the year, when the sun at midday is directly overhead in that latitude, and the air is at its driest. The second time he crosses the same parallel the summer rains have fallen, and the air is laden with moisture and work is in full swing.

The other village was that of the Paraiyans; it was on the eastern side of the high-road, on slightly lower ground than the caste village, in a shady grove of palms and other trees. It consisted exclusively of round huts of the regular Paraiyan type, walls and roof being similarly constructed of sticks and palm leaves. I did not consider this at all a bad type of construction; there is plenty of ventilation, and such habitations, so situated, always seemed to me when I entered them to be cooler than any other sort of house not equipped with electric fans. But they are at the very extreme of cheapness, as the dwellers make them out of materials they gather themselves. To live in one does not confer pecuniary repute, and so all the time I was in India they were being steadily superseded, under the influence of what is called "a higher standard of living," and cob and thatch were also giving place to brick and tiles. I presume the Paraiyans of Eruvelliipet slept in their huts at night, but by day they all, men, women and children, seemed to live entirely out of doors, the women not sharing the love of privacy of those of higher castes.

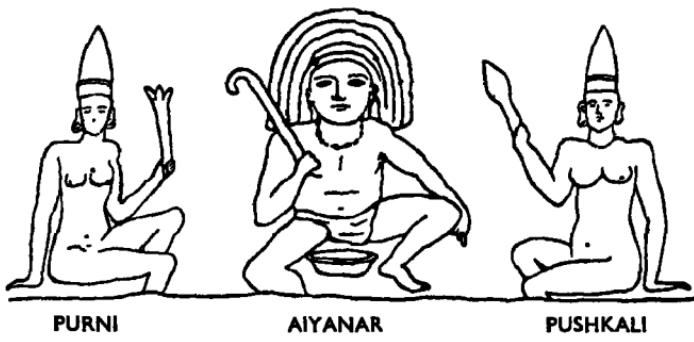
This village also had its deities and its temples. One was a brick and tiled dwelling for Desamma or Mariyattal, explained to me as the goddess of smallpox, but perhaps also of cholera and other plagues, to whom also trees were sacred whose leaves had reputed medicinal value. This temple had been built by the



From *S. M. Sivak Indian Pictures* (1918).
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THE APPROACH TO THETTUPALLI, A TYPICAL VILLAGE OF THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY

Paraiyans out of their own earnings at a cost of Rs. 300. The other temple was more interesting. It consisted of a delightful open glade, sacred to Aiyanar, the special protector of all the untouchable castes among the Tamils, who rides at night in the air round the village, driving away the evil spirits which otherwise might plague it. He demands no offerings save horses to ride on. Accordingly the Eruvelli-pet Paraiyans gave him a new hollow terra-cotta steed every year, and the survivors of some thirty years were arranged along the margin of his grove facing him. They varied in size and finish, averaging about the size of a sheep, but none



AIYANAR AND HIS TWO WIVES

(From *Some South Indian Villages* (1918). Reproduced by kind permission of the Oxford University Press.)

had the full equipment of legs, and many had lost their heads. I have seen a good many Aiyanar temples, but no other like this. There was one of the usual type in the next village, a solidly built brick and tile structure allowing about as much space inside as a telephone box, standing on a brick platform in an open space with two massive brick and plaster horses, the size and build of a heavy English carthorse, standing ready bridled and saddled in front, with two little grooms holding the reins. These cost practically nothing for maintenance.

Aiyanar himself, in Eruvelli-pet, living pleasantly in the open under trees, was represented by an image carved in high relief on a block about two feet long by ten inches high of some hard granitic stone. He wore a curious head-dress which framed his broad good-natured face with semicircular folds, a loincloth, ear-

rings and a necklace, but no other clothes, and was represented as squatting in front of a food-bowl, and carrying a short crooked stick over his right shoulder. His two wives sat symmetrically on either side of him, Purni on his right, Pushkali on his left, slight, graceful forms with pleasing features, and no clothing except curious high head-dresses, shaped like a bishop's mitre, but somewhat higher and with only one peak. If I remember rightly the gods in Elephanta wore similar head-dresses. I have seen them nowhere else. These head-dresses made me conjecture at the time that the sculpture was not the work of any local artist, and long afterwards I found an additional reason for thinking it must have been the work of a man from the west coast in the fact that the goddesses' ear ornaments, plugs inserted in the distended lobes, were of the Malayali fashion, and not found among the Tamil women. They also, where they stick to the old fashion, pierce girls' ears, and gradually enlarge the holes, but not by inserting plugs of wood, nor do they, like the Malayalis, subsequently wear such plugs decorated with gold. Instead they do the stretching by putting in lead rings, gradually increasing the number till the fashionable shape is reached, when more costly rings are substituted. Of all barbarous ways of beautifying the female form the Tamil is one of the least objectionable in respect of the victim's comfort; the Malayali method is painful whenever the plugs are taken out of a girl's ears and bigger ones forced in, though in that fashion the final result is less unpleasing aesthetically to an English eye. Noses, south of Madras, as a rule are not decorated.

On the river bank on the opposite side of the Malattar I was shown another sacred carved figure which might have had a similar origin to Aiyana and his wives. It shows a man squatting on the ground, naked except for a tall head-dress and the sacred thread of the Brahmin, and is the memorial of a proprietor whose lands were cultivated for him at night by Kali and her six sisters. One night they took a holiday, and the ungrateful man upbraided them for laziness. Kali promptly killed him, thereby making him a proper object of worship. His image when I saw it was black with ghee. What struck me as extremely curious was that Kali herself was represented by a small stone with three spots on it, which did not show traces of ghee. Moreover, when I talked about the worship of the ungrateful landowner in Madras Club,

the comment was "of course," and I was given an explanation of the underlying psychology which seemed obvious to the speaker, but which I did not properly understand. I gathered vaguely that when a god kills a mortal he does so by causing some of his own divine essence to pass into the man, whose body cannot endure it. Perhaps the story of Zeus and Semele embodies the same idea.

On the whole religion in Eruvelliipet seemed to me a natural



THE UNGRATEFUL CULTIVATOR

KALI

(From *Some South Indian Villages* (1918). Reproduced by kind permission of the Oxford University Press.)

expression of the people's hopes and fears, and an emollient of the acerbities of life. It also seemed to be free from any obviously pernicious ethical element. It did not occur to me to ask whether the temples had *devadasis* and I feel sure that they had not. Religious ceremonies and the maintenance of priests cost money, and this was obtained in Eruvelliipet from communal resources not commonly available. Roads in South India are commonly lined on both sides with trees, banyans and margosas being the most

usual. But in this particular taluk some P.W.D.* genius had planted instead coconut palms, mangoes and tamarinds, and every year the right of picking the fruit was auctioned mile by mile, the proceeds going to road maintenance. Eruvelli pet representatives regularly bought on the village account the two miles within and adjacent to its own area, and then held a second auction confined to the villagers themselves, in small lots, at which prices about ten times as high were realized, the average benefit to the fund being about Rs.200 per annum. Supplementary sources were the sale to one villager of the exclusive right to catch fish in the tank, and to another of the right to cut reeds, which grew abundantly and were valued for thatching. The common fund was also drawn upon, when it was thought advisable, in order to make presents to influential persons whose favour could be bought profitably.

Padials

The Paraiyans were "proletariate" in the original Latin sense of the term—people, that is, who have no security they can mortgage except their offspring (proles)—more nearly than in the Marxist sense. Possessing no property except the rags they wore and the huts they built for themselves, they yet could borrow money sometimes for a special occasion. Thus soon after my visit a young man aged eighteen, being desirous, not only of marrying, but also of celebrating his wedding with due *éclat*, borrowed Rs.25 from a ryot, whom he contracted to serve as a "padial" until the debt was paid. As a padial he would receive a definite allowance of grain every month and a present of clothing once a year, and in return be bound to render the creditor any service he might require. His wife also could be called upon to serve, but if so her labour had to be paid for. By law such debts cannot be passed on to the next generation, but the employers preach the doctrine that a padial's son ought to regard them as debts of honour. One Eruvelli pet employer told me that he gave his padials 30 Madras measures of paddy per month, which would yield 50 lb. of husked rice, which is very little more than the prison allowance of grain for a man doing hard labour, and the grain allowable is supplemented in gaol by vegetables, condiments

* Public Works Department—the Government department for civil engineering, created by Lord Dalhousie (1848–1856).

and a little oil. Another employer gave 22 Madras measures of paddy, a daily meal of ragi porridge, an extra allowance of 18 Madras measures once a year and two cloths. Exactly how the women and children get fed remained a mystery to me, but not a greater mystery than the corresponding question in the case of English agricultural labourers in the eighteenth century. In villages of this type there is an urgent seasonal demand for female labour, since women do the transplanting of paddy, and a small steady demand for pounding the grain to husk it. The usual method of doing this is to partly boil the paddy and spread it in the sun to dry, the grain swells first and then shrinks, and the loosened husk is separated easily; but Brahmins require that grain for their consumption shall be husked without the preliminary boiling. The numbers of the Paraiyans and of the other Adi Dravida* castes who do the main work of rice-growing in South India are well maintained from one census to another. The children therefore must be well enough fed to survive in sufficient number to replace their parents, whereas I believe that the numbers of our corresponding workers in the eighteenth century had to be continually recruited from the younger sons of small peasants and farmers.

Did the young man mentioned above pay too high a price for his one day of glory, when he feasted his neighbours of his own caste, at the price of his freedom? Presumably he calculated that by losing freedom he gained security and thought the exchange desirable. He had an alternative. In Villupuram there was an office of the Ceylon Labour Commission, which under Government supervision recruited labourers for the rubber estates. There, according to the figures supplied to me by an officer in the service, he would have been able with his wife to earn, in addition to maintenance, cash to the amount of about Rs.40 in the four busiest months, and about the same in the other eight months of the year. The slump in rubber which stopped recruiting must have been a calamity for the Adi Dravidas.

In the propertied class of a ryotwari village there is a continual upward and downward movement among the landholders, deter-

* Adi Dravida (original Dravidian) is the happily chosen official designation of the depressed castes of the Madras Presidency, superseding about 1920 the term *Panchama* (fifth caste), Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras being regarded as the first four castes.

mined by the Hindu law of succession, equal division of landed property among sons, and the varying numbers of families, the prolific families tending to sink into deeper poverty, those producing few children to grow wealthy. Of this Eruvelliipet provided a good example. Its richest man was the only son of his father, and he inherited also the estate of his uncle who died without leaving an heir, and thus he came into possession of about 130 acres of fertile land, which yielded a big surplus over any reasonable wants. The natural course for him was to lend a ready ear to the petitions of his poor neighbours who begged for loans to carry them over to the next harvest, which loans always carry very heavy rates of interest. The same debtors were likely to need bigger loans the next year, and need them sooner, with the ultimate result of the mortgaged land passing into the ownership of the creditor. It was presumably in this way that the Eruvelliipet plutocrat had increased his holding in the village to 400 acres, of which he cultivated about 200 with the labour of padials, sub-letting the rest, and he had in addition acquired land in neighbouring villages.

The return journey to Madras was by a day train, which passed slowly along the plain, amidst hedgeless cultivated lands, groves of trees, and clustered villages, with here and there a stretch of waste and barren land. At one point the waste area was so large that I drew Sundaram's attention to it, and asked, "Is that a tank, or a river, or a reserved forest?" He said it might be either, but presently called my attention to certain white painted wooden posts, with the letters R.F. on them, which showed that it was a reserved forest. Probably it had only recently been reserved in order that it might have a chance of recovering. Near Chingleput we passed through a very pleasant district of ancient tanks nestling among low wooded hills.

On the basis of my observation in Eruvelliipet I drew up a "Village Questionnaire," and after getting it criticized by experts and tested, I had notebooks made up with the questions typed, interleaved with blank pages, and dealt them out to students who undertook to make surveys of their native villages during the long vacation, and offered a few prizes of Rs.15 each for those that were done most thoroughly. A selection of the first batch with my editorial contributions was printed for the University by the

Madras Government Press, and published by the Oxford University Press.* When I got to Madras I had found that students looked upon Economics as a fairly easy option for degree getting, and as consisting of a series of unintelligible theories to be learnt parrot fashion from Marshall's *Principles*, with no relation to actual life in India if anywhere else. I wanted to make them regard it as concerned with ordinary contemporary Indian life, with as its central object of study the causes of, and remedies for, Indian poverty. To incite them to survey their native villages seemed a simple way of achieving this result.

* *Some South Indian Villages*, 1918.

CHAPTER VII

SALEM AND ITS ENVIRONS

My first opportunity of testing my questionnaire came to me through the kindness of Mr. E. W. Legh, the Collector of Salem, a district with a population of about two millions and a town of the same name as its centre. Very soon after my return from Eruvelliipet I met Mr. Legh at Government House, and was introduced to him by Lord Pentland as to one with like interests. Mr. Legh got copies of the first draft of my questionnaire filled up for two villages near Salem, and invited me for a week-end so that I could compare the surveys with the facts as I saw them.

Salem is almost on the same latitude as Villupuram and Pondicherry, and about 120 miles inland. It is on the railway from Madras to the West Coast, for Cochin, Calicut and Malabar, which passes through the Palghat Gap between the Nilgiri Hills on the north and the equally high ranges on the south, beginning with the Palni Hills and continuing almost to Cape Comorin. Salem stands on the edge of the plain, the railway from Madras skirts the Shevaroy hills, and the rocky foothills of the Nilgiris on the other side are close to the town. This line is the Indian broad gauge of 5 feet 6 inches chosen by Lord Dalhousie and his engineering adviser, O'Shaughnessy, as a happy mean between the English broad and narrow gauges of 7 feet and 4 feet 8 inches. It is a good gauge, and it is a pity that in many instances it was considered necessary to adopt the metre gauge instead in order to save on the initial cost.

Mr. and Mrs. Legh had as visitors two junior I.C.S. men, assistant district officers who had come in from outlying stations, one being Krishnagiri,* and they set Mrs. Legh talking about the history of that station. It is an ancient hill fort, only accessible with difficulty, but it was captured by the Mohammedans when they reached the southern limit of their conquests after the fall of the Vijayanagar empire. After many assaults by day and night had failed, the Mahomedan commander as a last resort betook himself to prayer. An angel appeared to him and promised that if

* Krishna's Mountain; similarly Nilgiris means Blue Mountains.

the next assault were led by the two most pious men in the army it would be successful. That night a tempest descended on the camp, with lightning and deafening thunder and a storm of wind which tore the tents from their fastenings and stampeded the horses and baggage animals. But amidst the general uproar and confusion the General found one calm spot, where two men still squatted on the ground where their tent had been, continuing the recitation of the Koran, and only noticing the storm to the extent of using the flashes of lightning to read the text. They, it was plain, were the divinely-appointed leaders of the forlorn hope.

Next morning the assault began, the Koran enthusiasts leading, and the rest of the army keeping a discreet distance behind. As soon as the leaders got within cannon shot the Hindus fired, and so accurately that the first two shots carried the leaders' heads off their shoulders, and the heads rolled down to the bottom of the cliff. But the men themselves were not disturbed, without a moment's pause and quite calmly they continued, minus their heads, to climb till they reached the top, when at last the defenders' nerves gave way and they fled down the opposite side of the mountain. Lest anyone should doubt the truth of this history, there still may be seen a shrine at the top of the hill where the bodies were buried, and another for the two heads at the bottom. Mrs. Legh had seen them.

During the same visit she had also witnessed a conjuring trick which she thought was unusual enough to be interesting. It was at an entertainment which the Krishnagiri folk got up in Mr. Legh's honour, and at which he presided. A big wicker-work hamper was brought on to the stage, the conjuror's boy was tied up with ropes by members of the audience, and put in the hamper, which was shut down and roped. Next hamper and boy were pierced through in all directions with sword thrusts, a policeman put on guard, and a curtain lowered separating policeman, chest and boy from everyone else, audience, Mr. Legh, and conjuror. After a short interval the curtain was raised again; the chest was still there, corded as before, but the policeman had disappeared and the boy, unhurt, was sitting on the chest with the policeman's helmet on his head. The audience rushed on the platform, the ropes were untied, and the policeman was found inside the chest, crammed in uncomfortably. When he was helped out he could

give no explanation of what had happened, and seemed to be emerging from a hypnotic trance. We also, over the Salem dinner table, could give no explanation, but now that readers' minds have been disciplined by the recent spate of detective novels, I expect the probable explanation will be obvious to many.

Mallur and its Misfortunes

Next morning Mr. Legh and I started at six o'clock to visit Mallur, for the Indian "sun-dried Bureaucrat," alias District Officer, seizes upon the cooler early morning hours for out-of-door work. The clerk who had filled in the questionnaire for the village accompanied us; he and I explored the village and talked with villagers during the next four hours.

Mallur was selected by Mr. Legh as a typical village of the district around Salem, which is a centre of the cotton hand-loom weaving. It proved to be more densely populated than Eruvelliipet. With a cultivated area of 750 acres and scarcely any more land that could be cultivated, it had a population in 1911 of 2,042, about 1,600 per square mile of cultivable land, distributed in families as follows:—

- 250 families of pattadars* who cultivated their own land.
- 6 families of pattadars who sublet their lands (3 temple priests, 2 petty officials, and 1 old woman).
- 16 hand-loom weavers.
- 10 potters.
- 15 masons, blacksmiths, goldsmiths and carpenters.
- Paraiyan families numbering 427 individuals.

A rocky open space adjoining the high-road to Salem was used for a weekly market (*sandai*), at which the villagers sold the products of their various industries, and bought from travelling traders. As the Saturday morning of my visit was not a market day the market-place was almost empty; of what there was for sale I remember only some condiments and evil-smelling fish.

Mallur was going through a very bad time, its resources having been cut down in two directions. The weavers produced plain cloths for the Salem market; all but two or three, who had the

* Holders of pattas, i.e. tenants of Government land under ryotwari tenure, paying kist.

fly shuttle looms introduced by the Madras Department of Industry, used the common country loom, which at best of times yields very poor returns in the face of mill competition, and in 1916 the industry was further depressed by the shortage of dyes, and consequently of dyed yarn, caused by the war. Moreover plague was raging not far away at Palni, the fear of which kept traders away from Salem. In consequence the average earnings of a weaver were calculated as being about the same as those of a Paraiyan coolie, 5 annas per day.

Even greater misfortune came upon the village agriculture. The soil was largely rich loam; on some plots, if there was water enough, two crops of paddy and one of cholam* were raised annually, and most of the rest bore two crops, mostly millets of various sorts and ground-nuts. Such intensive cultivation was necessary, since the average holding of each peasant family was only 3 acres. The total kist was only Rs.1,812.13, an average of Rs.2.7 or 3s. 3d. per acre, but everything depended upon the water supply, which during the rainless months came from the Mallur tank, which was fed by its own stream from the hills. The tank was reckoned upon to give a six-months' supply of irrigation water, and also to replenish the subsoil water tapped by wells for the extra watering necessary for a continuous succession of crops. All was going well up to about the year 1911; the village had a co-operative credit society, which advanced loans to about Rs.2,000, and the village was practically free from other debt. Then the stream began to dwindle, the six-months' supply diminished to three months', the level of subsoil water fell, and the pattadars borrowed Rs.20,000 to deepen their wells, and reduced the area under paddy from 239 acres in 1912 to 55 in 1915. They attributed this calamity to the construction of a great reservoir, known as the Panamarattupatti tank, to supply the town of Salem with water, although it was fed by other streams than theirs; the P.W.D. officials tried to persuade them that it was due to deficient rains. They were not to be convinced, and despairing of their tank, ceased to keep the bund in good repair. Then in 1915 came very heavy rains, the tank was filled to overflowing and the bund was breached, and less water still was stored. I do not know what has happened since, but hope

* The great millet, known in North India as Jowar.

that the "tank repair and restoration" division of the P.W.D. took the matter in hand, in spite of the resentment of the Department's men at the Mallur attitude to the Salem reservoir.

The loans mentioned bore 18 per cent interest; half was raised in the village, and half from Salem moneylenders. The annual charge for interest, it will be noted, was almost exactly double the land revenue charged on the village.

Holdings of land in South India are usually very much "fragmented," they consist as a rule of a number of plots separated from one another, some of which may be too small for cultivation. For the Mallur villagers, who had so fully developed intensive cultivation with the help of wells, fragmentation was exceptionally disadvantageous, accordingly they made exchanges with one another in order to consolidate their holdings. The same practice was reported to me as being followed in the Tanjore district, and since the war much has been done by the Indian Government to encourage and facilitate it, especially in the Punjab. But Mallur went further, and did what I have never found done in any other village. When the ryot had consolidated his holding, if it were distant from his home he built a "field hut" on it, which might be merely a storhouse for implements, a resting-place during the heat of the day and a sleeping-place during the busy season, or might be enlarged into a cottage in which the ryot and his family lived permanently. The hut shown me as typical was of the simpler sort, a single room about 12 feet by 15 feet, built beside the proprietor's well, and under the shade of a group of coconut palms. The owner invited me in, and following the hospitable custom of Indian villagers, climbed up a palm, brought down a tender coconut, and gave me the milk with a squeeze of lime juice—a very pleasant and refreshing drink. There were about twenty such field huts.

As may be supposed, wells in Mallur had to be much deeper than in Eruvellipet, and in consequence they were worked by bullock lifts. For this purpose the Tamil employs an ingenious apparatus not used in northern India, called the *Kabalai*, after, it is said, a famous South Indian mathematician who invented it. It is a large leather bucket ending below in a leather tube open at the end. The bucket is suspended by a rope passing over a pulley fixed on the edge of the well about three feet above ground-level,

the end of the tube similarly suspended by another rope passing over a pulley on the level of the ground, both ropes being attached to the yoke. They are adjusted so that as the full bucket is drawn up the end of the tube is level with the top of the bucket until the latter has reached ground-level, then the tube is pulled over the lower pulley while the bucket is drawn up higher to the upper one; the water then flows out into a little irrigation channel. Conversely, when the bucket is lowered into the water it fills immediately so that both filling and emptying are automatic, and only the one man who drives the ox is needed to work the lift. In northern India two men are required, one to drive the ox or oxen, and one to fill and empty the bucket. I was once told that the Kabalai is also used in Mesopotamia, but I have not yet been able to get that statement corrected or verified.

A Zemindari Village

The other selected village was a considerable distance from the town of Salem, higher up among the hills, and a Zemindari village. When these southern districts were subject to the Vijayanagar Empire the tribute levied upon them was collected by "Poligars," who may be described as feudal lords. After the fall of that empire many Poligars assumed the position of independent chieftains, submitting no more than they were compelled to the authority of the Nabob of the Carnatic, who again was subject to the Nizam of the Deccan,* the ruler of the Mahomedan State which displaced the Hindu Empire. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the Madras Government was ordered by the East India Company to follow the course already imposed by it upon Bengal on the advice of Warren Hastings's enemy Francis, and to confer upon the Presidency the blessing of landlordism of the English type. This was to be done by creating "Zemindars," giving them ownership rights over all the land, subject to the payment of definite annual quit rents to the Company's Collectors as land revenue, the amounts being fixed in perpetuity, as in the case

* The Nizam's Dominions, commonly known as the State of Hyderabad after the capital, although much reduced, still form the largest Indian State under native rule, having an area of 82,698 square miles, and a population, according to the census of 1921, of 11,284,473, and in 1931 of 14,436,148.

of the contemporary English land tax. These Zemindars were authorized to extract from the cultivators of the land as much additional rent as could be squeezed out.

The Madras Government had to comply with these instructions, though it would appear that it did so reluctantly. Where it found Poligars in possession it converted them into Zemindars, unless it regarded them as too disorderly; elsewhere it searched for men who could be regarded as fit for Zemindar status, but in the great majority of villages such could not be found—how foolish and unjust it would be to set up such a petty monarch over a village like Mallur is obvious. After about one-third of the Presidency had been Bengalized in accordance with the contemporary English doctrine of the ideal land tenure, the Madras Government under General Munro's leadership succeeded in getting permission to make settlements of land revenue directly with the actual cultivators. These settlements are fixed for thirty years instead of in perpetuity, but are only liable to be increased in moderation at the termination of the thirty years, and for definite reasons, such as a higher general price-level for agricultural produce, improvement of irrigation facilities provided by the Government, or of means of communication. Thus was created the Madras Ryotwari system of land tenure, a very elaborate piece of work, as it involved making surveys and maps for all Ryotwari villages similar to those made in England for Tithe Commutation, recording occupation and the area of every separate plot of land in acres and hundredth parts of acres (acres and cents).

The Madras Zemindar system developed on other lines than that of Bengal. In Bengal, as the surplus income retained by the Zemindars increased, they commonly, in order to become unmitigated parasites, adopted the practice of creating inferior sub-zemindars, or sub-lessees, who paid them a fixed rent and gathered in any surplus for themselves, thus becoming heirs to the future unearned increment. These again, in many cases, followed the example of their betters, so that the money paid out by the actual cultivator for the right to till the soil may have to pass through the hands of half a dozen middlemen, each of whom retains a portion. Not until the exactions on the peasantry of Bengal had grown to many times the revenue paid to the Bengal Treasury were effective steps taken to protect them from further spoliation.

Zemindar rights in Bengal are subject to the Hindu or Mahomedan laws of inheritance, the former prescribing equal division among sons, the latter equal division of two-thirds of the property among the sons, and of one-third among the daughters. From the operation of these two causes the beneficiaries of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal have become very numerous, and include great numbers of people who, though often very poor, look upon manual work as impossibly beneath their dignity. The young men, if they can, crowd into Calcutta University, which is, I believe, in the number of its undergraduates and annual output of graduates, the greatest in the world, and later swell the numbers of the middle-class unemployed.

In Madras, on the other hand, legislation for the protection of peasants from Zemindars became effective at an earlier stage, so that the incomes the Zemindars retain for themselves do not much exceed what they remit to the Government. Also an "Imperable Estates Act" is in force to encourage inheritance by primogeniture, under which daughters and younger sons are not allowed any share in the real property, but only to money incomes chargeable on the income derived from it. In consequence Madras zemindarism resembles English landlordism fairly closely. Under an exceptionally good man it may work well; under the more usual type of zemindar it provides him with the means of drinking and drugging himself to an early death, and handing over his estate to be nursed into good order by the Court of Wards. When the heir comes of age, the same process can be repeated.

But to return to the particular village near Salem, the name of which I have unfortunately forgotten. It was in charge of a Mr. Stevenson as agent, a retired police officer in his seventies, who was living in Salem on his pension. He drove me out in his car, and on the way told me the recent history of the village. The zemindar had other properties and interests, and had left the responsibility to agents, Brahmins who wasted the rents received in litigation with the tenants, so that they remitted nothing, and the value of the estate was going down steadily. So finally he appealed to Mr. Stevenson to take on the job, on the condition that if any net income were obtained it should not be remitted but used for the benefit of the village. The new agent quickly composed the quarrels with the ryots, made some metalled roads, sank wells,

and won the confidence of the villagers to such an extent that they brought their disputes before him for adjudication.

When we reached the village the manner in which the people ran out to greet us confirmed what he told me, but there were no disputes for settlement just then, so I could not see his little manorial court in working. I understood, however, that it was held in the open air under the shade of a tree. Stevenson told me that he had recently brought out a young I.C.S. man to witness the proceedings, and afterwards asked him what he thought of it. The I.C.S. man said, "I thought that in every case your judgment was contrary to the evidence."—"So it was. But what did you think the villagers thought about my decisions?"—"They evidently thought they were all right." To elucidate the matter further Stevenson picked out one case, and said, "What did you think of the evidence of ____?"—"I thought it was convincing."—"But did you look at his hands?"—"No."—"If you had, you would have seen that they were twitching nervously. He had made up a cunning story, and could keep his face under control, but not his hands as well."

It is often said that one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest, blessing that the British Raj has conferred upon India is the introduction of British justice, and British methods of administering civil and criminal law. This theory is at variance with my own experience. I shall recur to this subject later, and here only remark that the above incident illustrates the difficulty of applying those methods satisfactorily in India.

There was much waste land sloping up towards the mountains within the village boundary, and Stevenson had plans for sinking a well where it seemed probable that water could be tapped, and planting the surrounding land with fruit-trees. On other parts of what may be called the demesne he had already planted a great many mangoes and lime trees. Salem mangoes have a high reputation throughout South India, and limes are always in demand. He had been troubled with insect pests and blights, and told with much appreciation how when he applied to the Agricultural College at Coimbatore for expert help in combating them, the College had sent him a young Brahmin student, who stripped off his outer garments and clad, like a coolie, in turban and loin-cloth only, did the work himself. He had received, Stevenson thought, the right



From *Some South Indian Villages* (1918)]

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AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS USED BY THE VILLAGERS (PLOUGH,
HARROW, SEED-DRILL, MAMOTI, PICK, PULLEY-WHEEL) BEFORE
COBRA SHRINE, THETTUPALLI

sort of training. I gave my opinion, for what it was worth, that the spot he had selected for the well was promising, and wished him success in his enterprise.

Kanjamalai and Josiah Heath

Salem is the site of one of the greatest and most unfortunate industrial enterprises associated with the East India Company. Near the town there is a mountain of iron ore, Kanjamalai by name, which has been a lure for capitalists again and again. Samples have been taken repeatedly, sent to England for assay, and declared to contain 60 per cent or more of iron. About 1826 Josiah Heath, a retired servant of the East India Company, secured the exclusive right to dig and smelt, and formed a company for the purpose, but misfortune dogged the enterprise from the start. The machinery installed was to be worked largely by oxen, but the designers had greatly overestimated the muscular power of the South Indian ox, so that much time was lost and money wasted in replacing it. Heath seems to have been a man of energy and ability, and certain improvements in the art of smelting are recorded to his credit in the history of the industry. The iron produced was intended for export, and I have seen a statement that it was used in the construction of the Menai Straits suspension bridge, but cannot vouch for its accuracy. It was used for the building of a pier for ocean-going vessels at Madras. But the cost of transport ate up profits, and the fundamental basis of the industry was unsound. The ore was smelted with charcoal, which was obtained from the surrounding forests, and as felling proceeded, the works were surrounded by a continually widening area of treeless waste. The East India Company took up shares, and subsidized the enterprise again and again, sending good money after bad, and new companies succeeded those that had exhausted their resources and put in fresh capital. Branch establishments were set up on the West Coast and on the East, and attempts made to organize transport by the River Cauvery to Porto Novo, which is close by the Fort St. David to which Clive had fled when the French captured Madras. But increasing demands on the river for irrigation water hindered these attempts, and the growing efficiency of the methods of iron production in works situated on coalfields made Kanjamalai prospects hopeless. Never-

theless the enterprise survived the East India Company itself by some six or seven years, being carried on in the hope that the House of Commons would recommend Treasury support. The Select Committee's report was adverse, and after forty years of annual deficits the works were abandoned, and adventurers' subsequent attempts to use favourable assays in order to entice fresh investors to throw away their money on them have failed.

I was myself in touch with the last of those attempts. It was initiated by M. Gaudart, the head of a Belgian firm operating rolling mills in Pondicherry. The works were notably efficient, but were dependent for raw material on any scrap which could be collected. M. Gaudart purchased the remains of the Madras pier for this purpose; this perhaps suggested to him the idea that some use might, after all, be made of Kanjamalai. His scheme was an elaborate one, and involved the co-operation of the Madras Government and the great French armament firm, Schneiders of Creusot. A hydro-electric station was to be established on the Cauvery to utilize the power of falls on the river for generation of electricity, by means of which a process of partial electric smelting would be carried out where the ore was dug, using methods developed in Norway and Sweden, and the semi-purified ore despatched to Creusot. At M. Gaudart's request I gave Sir Harold Stuart an outline of the scheme, which obviously would have to be examined carefully before Madras could take any action, and meanwhile M. Gaudart put the matter before Schneiders and sent samples. Their reply was final. The samples turned out to contain only 30 per cent of iron, so the project was not worth consideration. I inferred that there was a mixture of ores in the mountain, and previous workers had exhausted the best veins.

From the point of view of the history of the exploitation of the iron resources of India, the Salem enterprise is of importance as having satisfied the Government that iron production in works of a modern type could not hope to succeed if based on charcoal. Accordingly its next effort was made on the Bengal coalfield, utilizing low-grade ore which happened to be conveniently available on the spot. This enterprise, under the management of a German metallurgist, was successful, and the works were handed over to a private company which after certain reconstructions is

still carrying on operations as the Bengal Iron Company. Moreover, in other parts of India members of the Geological Department have discovered whole ranges of hills abounding in iron ores as rich as any ever found at Salem, and much nearer coalfields, one of which is exploited by the Tata Iron and Steel Company.

Of Josiah Heath and his successors it may be said that the evil that they did lives after them. Ruthless felling upset the balance of tree life. Rice fields which yield crops year after year in perpetual succession need green manure to maintain their fertility, and this, by ancient custom, the peasants obtain from the forests, in the form of vetches by preference, but also by lopping off branches and chopping down young trees and shoots, inflicting losses on the forests which have to be made good by the annual growth. After the larger trees had been burnt for charcoal the gathering of green manure was in excess of reproduction, it got to be so scarce as to cease to be worth the effort of collection, and then the ryots turned in their goats, which finished off the vegetation. Monsoon rains stripped the unprotected hillsides bare of soil, and what had been luxuriant forest was converted to bare rock and boulders, with just one or two sacred groves left on the tops of hills to show what had been lost; beyond them no vegetation except prickly pear and euphorbia.

Mr. Legh took me round about by car and we searched for surviving tree life. We found one young tree growing out of a cleft in a rock too high and steep and lacking in footholds for either man or goat to climb, and that was all. Next morning, at daybreak, I made a fresh attempt by myself. Looking out of my bedroom at the back of Mr. Legh's house I saw on a distant hillside what seemed like vegetation, and went in search. About four hours afterwards I returned in triumph, bringing back a twig from a young tree over fifteen feet in height, to prove to Mr. Legh that he was wrong in saying that no such thing could be found on any unreserved forest in the neighbourhood. He asked me where I had found it, and when I told him, explained that that was a reserved forest, where no felling or grazing was allowed without the permission of the Forest Department. That permission was not being given, and the Department was hoping that in course of time the forest would recover of itself. It might or might not, it did not appear that anything effective could be

done except at too great a cost. The forest was not being given a fair chance; of that I had gathered evidence in the stumps of young trees lopped down; forest guards being all too few for the job. I wondered whether some local god or goddess might not be induced to take the "Reserved Forest" under protection, if suitably approached through the priesthood. But what would the Bishop of Madras say then?

Tanks, Urban and Rural

That morning I had made a beeline to my objective across a little stretch of country without means of irrigation, partly uncultivated, partly devoted to "dry crops," among which castor-oil plants were conspicuous. They are not a valuable crop, and their presence indicates that the land also is not considered valuable. On my way back, getting a little off the line, since I had to trust to memory for the direction, I came upon a pleasant grove of trees, and in it a tank which interested and puzzled me. Tanks in South India are of two sorts, rural and urban. Rural tanks are strictly utilitarian, they are constructed by throwing earth embankments across watercourses which fill in the monsoons and dry up afterwards. Urban tanks are square in shape, excavated and flanked with stone steps by which the townsfolk descend to the water's edge. They stand in the centre of open spaces, and they are fed by underground springs, or, in a deltaic tract, from seepage from the surrounding water-bearing soil. They also serve utilitarian ends, since the surrounding population draws water from them for drinking, cooking, and other domestic purposes, and bathes, washes clothes, and sometimes cattle in them. But they are frequently sacred also, and some of the largest have little islands in the middle, with little temples, annexes of bigger temples facing the tank, and are the scenes of annual festivals. Now the tank which I came upon in the solitude, remote from habitations, was of this urban type; it was not very large, had no central islet, and I could not see any traces of a temple or any other buildings near by; but it was beautifully constructed, and showed along the highest tier of granite steps a patterned frieze; I took the pattern to be a conventionalized representation of the flower of the lotus lily, which would, I suppose, indicate that the tank was

sacred to Vishnu. The water was clear and looked pure, as though it were only used as a reserve supply of drinking water.

To understand why Indians use tanks for such miscellaneous purposes (for neither such tanks as these nor the manner of using them is peculiar to the south), it must be remembered that to the ordinary Indian purity is a positive quality, closely connected with sanctity, and not, as with us, a mere absence of undesirable admixture. The water of a sacred tank does not lose its purity even if the tank is used as a latrine. Thus a lady medical missionary once told me that she had shortly before received a deputation from her patients begging her to give up her practice of making up her medicine with distilled water, and to use instead the water of their sacred tank.

But how did my tank get to be where it was?

Salem Handicraftsmen and Markets

The town of Salem called to my mind Defoe's description of Exeter in the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is a trading centre, but also full of handicraftsmen. Hand-loom weaving was the largest industry, but the building of carts (bandies) and bamboo mat-making were also important, and there was a large trade in grain as well as in cloth. Bamboos for the covers of bandies and the mats were collected from the lower slopes of the Shevaroys, where they grew in abundance; above the bamboo belt there were coffee plantations, surviving from the time when coffee-planting in India was a profitable industry, and at the top the hill station of Yercaud, which had lost its repute by being suspected of not being free from malaria. I suggested once that if it were found not guilty it might with advantage be handed over to the French Republic, as a hill station for Pondicherry, in exchange for a number of diminutive French possessions which are of no value to France but a nuisance to Madras, since if a criminal stepped across their invisible frontiers he could not be legally captured without extradition proceedings. Yercaud is distant about a hundred miles from Pondicherry. But the French in Pondicherry seem to be pretty well content to stay there, as though they did not, like our people, crave to get away into the hills in the hot weather, nor to get back to France so frequently on long leave.

On the day of my early morning exploration, after the 10.30

breakfast, I strolled through the town by myself, unable to ask questions or understand the answers even if I had learnt the Tamil for questions I might want to ask,* but trying to pick up impressions by sight alone. The streets were pretty quiet; there were some fat, even bloated, traders sitting about, the ordinary man being thin and undersized, but neither fat trader nor thin artisan had on much in the way of clothing. In such a climate the best clothing is the colouring matter in the skin, which darkens readily in the Indian in proportion to the amount of exposure. It is, no doubt, the vitamins thus obtained directly from sunshine that enable the Indian worker to carry on in spite of the deficiency of his diet. I got tired, and looked round for means of refreshment, and proffered an anna (1d.) at a stall where there were bananas for sale. They were small bananas, but very cheap, I took away fifteen, which was as many as I could conveniently carry in my hands and pockets, but had to leave the greater part of my purchase behind, to the apparent regret of the stall-keeper.

Bananas in India are of many varieties, some large, some small; some juicy, some not; some tasteless, others full of flavour; some eaten raw, others cooked—which is natural, seeing that India is the original home of the banana.† The best variety that I ever met with I encountered in Rajahmundry; it is very large and juicy and of unequalled flavour, and coloured like a Ribston pippin; the most interesting variety in Sakchi, now called Jamshedpur, the site of the Tata Company's iron and steel works; that was of medium size, and full of black seeds the size of lentils, much resembling, as I suppose, the original wild fruit. What I bought in Salem were poor specimens, and I was glad to get back to the bungalow and be refreshed with tea.

* Once when I started to explore a tract of country on my bicycle I asked beforehand how I should ask the way to the station if I forgot it. The question was easy, "Station yenge?" (station where?), but the answer came in a torrent of quite unintelligible words.

† It is not as well known as it should be that working on this principle, that the number of varieties of a cultivated plant get more numerous as one approaches the centre where it was first cultivated; the Russian botanist, Ivanov, has located the original home of wheat cultivation in the north-west of the Punjab, thus confirming a theory of Indian archaeologists that the ancient civilization of the Indus valley preceded that of the Euphrates (cf. V. Gordon Childe, *New Light on the Most Ancient East*).

The second time I explored the town of Salem I had the help of a guide and interpreter. We went first to the villages on the outskirts where the mat-makers and bandy-builders lived, and I tried by questioning the makers about the selling prices of their goods, the cost of materials and rate of production, to get some idea of their probable earnings. Figures were given to me readily enough, but they worked out to impossible results, making it clear that the men had answered at random. The people seemed pretty well nourished, and reasonably cheerful, and their living conditions, in a pleasantly shaded rural spot, struck me as much more desirable than those of the craftsmen in the town.

Thence we walked straight through Salem by a main street, which is continued by the road to the station, and arrived at the Municipal Offices, situated at the opposite end of the town, outside the built-up area; for Salem local affairs were controlled by a municipal council, of which the Collector for the time being was Chairman* and chief executive officer, his relations with the Council being much the same as those of the Prefect of the Seine with the Paris municipality.

Near the beginning of the road I was shown the Market, a square, empty enclosure, with brickbats and rubbish strewed about. This was where the bandy- and mat-makers had done their shopping, since they had to pass it if they went to the shops of the bazaar, till the Salem Municipality, in a glow of loyal enthusiasm, resolved to celebrate the Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee by building a new market, which they placed on the compound of the municipal offices, a stretch of rocky ground, somewhat overgrown with prickly pear. That market consisted of rows of well-built stalls, with tiled roofs, brick walls and cement floors. One old woman was the only stall-holder, and the things she had to sell did not look as though they could be sold at a profit, even if there were any customers to buy them. I asked, "Is no use made of this market at all?" "Yes, men and women frequently came there in couples during the night." "Shade of Queen Victoria," I inwardly ejaculated.

Then I was told the history of the Jubilee Market in greater

* The practice of giving municipal councils the right and duty of electing their own chairmen had already been initiated and soon afterwards became the rule.

detail. When it was built, it was opened with due *éclat*, and at first a good many traders took up stalls. But there was little traffic coming in to Salem on that side, the country beyond being barren and thinly populated, and people did not come out of the town by the hot and dusty road to buy. The stall-holders, not being able to make profits by selling to one another, lost money and gave up their stalls, and no other traders could be induced to take their places. The municipal councillors, under the mute reproaches of the slighted Jubilee Memorial, got desperate, and shut up the old market, compelling the village artisans to shop in the bazaars, giving them twice as long a walk, and probably dearer purchasing; but this step, instead of helping the Jubilee market, only deprived the town of the income previously obtained from market rents. I asked why the municipality did not re-open it, in the hope that the trade and public gain derived from it might be regained; I got no answer, my guide looked at me, as though he thought I ought to be able to guess. Why should Salem shopkeepers go about to increase competition with their own businesses? Did English shopkeepers welcome the Co-ops.? I then asked the name of the man who was Collector at the time of the Diamond Jubilee, without whose approval and encouragement such a commemoration would not have been decided on; and that was given me. I looked it up when I was next in Madras Club, and found that before retirement he had received the knighthood which is bestowed on Indian Civil Servants after specially distinguished careers. I presume Salem's display of loyalty enhanced the merit of his record in Simla eyes.

CHAPTER VIII

PALNI AND RESETTLEMENT IN MADURA DISTRICT

THE Academic year in Madras ends at the end of March, the long vacation covering the three hot months of April, May and June. Then some rain is to be expected from the South-west Monsoon, and July and August are cooler, and the new session begins; but September is usually nearly as hot as May, and more trying, because of the greater humidity of the air, and there is a short vacation then. The North-east Monsoon, which gives the Carnatic coast its chief rains, is officially due on October 15th, and normally lasts well through November, a chilly and depressing month, and into December, sometimes into January; and there is a second short vacation at Christmas, with usually the pleasantest weather of the year.

Towards the end of March I set out on a southern tour. I had received an invitation from the Kumbakonam Economic Society to lecture there, from the American Mission College at Madura to pay a visit, although it was in vacation, and the Director of Agriculture had asked me to visit the Tinnevelly cotton district and the cotton port of Tuticorin, to make some investigations on his behalf. A fourth invitation, to which I gave precedence, was given to me shortly after my return from Eruvellipet at Mark and Bernard Hunter's dinner-table, where I met Mr. F. S. Boag, of the I.C.S., then engaged on the resettlement of land revenue for the Madura district, to stand for the next thirty years. He had just completed his work of survey over most of the district, and was about to go into camp at Palni. The Presidency rule is that there is every year a revision of the kist in each village by district officers, called *jamabandi*, to allow for changes of ownership and expansion or contraction of cultivation, but changes in the general rate can only be made at the resettlements which come, for each district, at thirty-year intervals, and which are carried out by officers put on special duty for the purpose. Mr. Boag urged me to come at once, before the weather got hotter, but I found he would still be in Palni in

the beginning of April, so I put off my journey to the end of term.

I learnt that Palni was some thirty miles from the nearest station, but that there was a motor-bus service. When I got to the station, fairly early in the morning, I was met by one of Mr. Boag's clerks, who told me that the motor-bus had broken down, but he was sending out to find a pony bandy. Such a bandy is a small two-wheeled cart, with a bamboo cover, but without seats. I had brought my bicycle, and asked for instructions about the route, which actually was plain enough, but the clerk declined to give them, on the ground that it was too hot for me to go by bicycle. While we were waiting, we talked. He gave me the conventional present of two limes. I asked, "Why is it that whenever we visit you, you Indians always give us presents?" He said, "Because we have a proverb which says that there are three classes of people who should never be approached without gifts, kings, gods and children." "In which class do you put us?" I asked. He smiled, but did not answer in words. Guessing his meaning, I said, "Perhaps a little of all three," and he smiled again.

He went on to tell me of the job on which he had been before he was posted to the settlement party. It was to work through registered leases of land, and compare the rents paid with the kist on the same lands for the purpose of the enquiry mentioned above. On the average it was found that the ryot who sublet received five times as much as he paid to the Government. I asked if the results of the enquiry were to be published. He said no. It appeared that the Government only wanted to be sure that the kist was not excessive, and it did not want to stir up a controversy on the subject.

Subrahmanyam's Temple

I got to the Palni travellers' bungalow early enough for a walk with Boag before dark, and we visited the temple which makes Palni a place of pilgrimage. It is at the top of a steep rocky hill with a twin hill adjoining it, also an outlier of the Palni Hills, but topped with a number of huge boulders instead of a temple. Temple and boulders both arose from the same incident in the lives of the gods, and in the following manner:

Siva was sitting eating a melon, and his two sons, Ganesa,

elephant-headed, pot-bellied god of wealth and prosperity, and Subrahmanyam, the fleet-footed god of war and victory, were watching him. They asked for a melon seed. Siva said he would give it to the one who made the circuit of the world in the shortest time. Subrahmanyam jumped on his peacock and raced off. Directly he was out of sight, Ganesa walked round his father, and said, "You are not the world only, but the whole universe, so the melon seed is mine." Siva gave it to him. Subrahmanyam meanwhile raced on and on, and had nearly finished his journey, having come round to India again, when he was overcome by fatigue, and lay down, with a hill for a pillow.

But it so happened that a certain Rishi, who had attained power by extraordinary fasting and penances, chanced to be wanting building material for some special purpose, and while Subrahmanyam was sleeping, sent his attendant demon to fetch stone. The demon pitched upon the Palni twin hills for the purpose, and, putting a great rod across his shoulders, hooked them on to the two ends of it, and heaved. One came up, not the other. Realizing that the weights were unequal, he went to the main range, and picked up rocks and placed them on the top of that which seemed lightest; again the other did not rise; it had the weight of the god on it. But he tugged and heaved so hard that he woke Subrahmanyam, who straightway killed him. The Rishi then came upon the scene, to find out why his servant had been so long about the job. I conceive him as a little man, "meagre as a lizard," with long, matted black hair, black finger nails, dressed in sandals, rags, and numerous necklaces of seeds threaded on cotton strings, exactly like a Hindu *sanyasi* whom I encountered once in a Madras post office writing to the Registrar of the University. He saw the dead body of his servant, and then the god Subrahmanyam was in an awkward fix, for even gods must quail before the righteous wrath of a Rishi. I forget exactly how the quarrel was composed, but the Rishi seems to have been gracious and conciliatory, since the two hills were left where they had been and the Rishi authorized the building of a great temple to Subrahmanyam on the top of the hill on which he had slept, while a little temple to the demon was built at the bottom. The Rishi himself, as I suppose, has long since attained Nirvana, and is absorbed into the godhead.

On our walk we passed the Demon's temple without observing it, not knowing then what to look for, and amidst more pious pilgrims made the ascent by a paved gangway, assisted by numerous stone steps. I do not remember much about the temple, except that we entered a courtyard, and were graciously received by the priests, who hung round our necks heavy garlands of sweetly-scented flowers, and did not show any signs of expecting a donation. But that reserve was not shared by the troops of monkeys who beset the path, they begged eagerly enough from everybody. I would have liked to put away my garland, but Boag made me understand that I must wear it as long as I was on the sacred hill; so we took them back to the bungalow.

After dinner we sat out in long chairs looking across the plain to the forest-clad slopes of the Palnis, which here rise some five thousand feet above it. The increasing darkness made visible some half-dozen or more fires blazing amidst the trees, and we wondered at this being allowed. I supposed at the time they were the work of some jungle tribe, taking that way of clearing little patches for cultivation, a process which has destroyed many thousands of acres of valuable forest, in defiance of forest regulations and forest guards. Later, the opposite hypothesis occurred to me, that the Forest Department was itself arranging the conflagration, in order to get rid of the long, dry grass, which later in the dry season would be a danger, while there was still moisture enough in the soil for the fires to be kept under control. At any rate, while I was in Palni, we saw those fires every night, and in the daytime could see no signs of the forest being any the worse. I never made the acquaintance of an Indian Forest officer serving in that area, so never had an opportunity of ascertaining the facts. But later on I found that the Department had constructed a long trench along the brow of the hills, and had done a great deal of planting on the plateau of eucalyptus and other Australian trees, and conifers.

The next day was a Sunday, and Boag mounted me, and we spent the morning riding to the foot of the hills; the afternoon in bathing and lunching and lying in the shade beside a little rivulet, beside which a steep path mounted the hillside, looking as though it would take one to the summit; and the evening in riding back again. I paid for that ride with some of my skin, all

unaccustomed to the saddle, and for some time suffered acutely the pains of the Oxford fresher when he first begins to train for Torpids. My boy said, "Master better ride bicycle." I did. I have not mounted a horse since.

Some Settlement Proceedings

On the Monday Boag was visiting a village some little distance away to finish up its business. It was accessible by a road, and I followed him some time afterwards to come in at the end. I found him in a big marquee, with all the men of the village squatting round him, dealing with cases of disputed ownership, examining documents, and listening to statements, while the boys of the village squatted round outside listening and peeping under the edges of the tent covering as still and quiet as mice. Of course I could understand nothing of the proceedings. But presently Boag adjourned the court to visit some disputed properties. One was a rock jutting out of the ground in the middle of the village, with basin-like hollows, which women used for pounding rice. A little group of Brahmins claimed that this rock was their ancestral property, the opposition that it belonged to all the villagers in common. Boag asked my opinion, which naturally was that there was no conceivable way in which a legal right of private ownership could get attached to it in a ryotwari village, since the essence of such a right was that it was derived from the cultivation of the holding. Boag agreed, and gave his verdict for village ownership, and I was pleased to think that if my voice had any effect at all, which was very improbable, it was to defeat the attempt of some of the richest men to squeeze a few extra annas from their poorest neighbours.

Anicuts and Ayacuts

This particular village had lands irrigated by water from the stream beside which we had picnicked the day before. The flow of water from these little streams is controlled by *anicuts*, stone weirs, which divert part of the flow into artificial channels resembling the "leats" of Devon and Cornwall made in ancient times by tin miners, and by their imitators, those who set up water-mills, and the Plymouth Corporation, who in the days of Queen Elizabeth made their head weir on the River Meavy and the

Plymouth Leat to supply their town with pure drinking water, an enterprise for which Drake got the credit, and much of the cash too,* and which again provided the exemplar for the still more famous new river of Hugh Myddleton in the next reign.

The area of land watered from any "anicut" is called its "ayacut." These anicuts, or some of them, must be very ancient, for they must have been far anterior to the "Great Anicut" near Trichinopoly, which controls the whole flow of the Cauvery by means of a masonry weir built right across the bed, which is the starting-place of the artificial River Coleroon, and regulates the irrigation of the wealthy Tanjore Delta. We must also associate with them the kindred Tamil art of creating tanks by building bunds across the dry watercourses which are in flood after the monsoon rains.

Since ancient kistvaens and dolmens of similar types found in South India and Cornwall are much discussed by archaeologists of different schools, ancient weirs and leats may also attract their attention. Did the idea of making them originate in India or in Cornwall, or in both, or in neither? I do not think we can trace them to Egypt, as Prof. W. J. Perry would doubtless prefer; and if they represent an instance of the diffusion of cultural elements, India seems to have the best claims, since water for irrigation is a more fundamental and ancient need than for tin mining.

However this may be, the Tamil Anicuts give a remarkable instance of the diffusion of culture in modern times. Just over a hundred years ago it was found that the water in the Cauvery below the Great Anicut was failing, and a considerable area of wet land dependent on it suffering in consequence. The military engineer Colonel Arthur Cotton was sent to investigate. He found that the Coleroon was getting more water than its proper share. It had a rather shorter course to the sea and consequently a more rapid flow, which had lowered its bed. Cotton carried out the

* The history of the Plymouth Leat was worked out by the historian R. N. Worth from the Corporation accounts, which showed that all the work was done by direct labour and paid for by the Corporation, which also paid Drake what was then the enormous sum of £300, no doubt to secure the Queen's consent. How much the hero paid out to grease courtiers' palms, and how much he kept for his own services, it would be idle to inquire.

necessary repairs, and was so impressed by the value of the Tamil work that he secured permission to attempt the same thing on a much bigger scale on the rivers Kistna and Godavery. There the principle of the control of the whole flow of a river by head weirs and its diffusion over the plains by irrigation canals had again a magnificent success, over 1,400,000 acres being added to the irrigated area.

The "Great Anicut" is believed to have been constructed in the eleventh century A.D. It was in 1836 that Cotton reconstructed it, and in 1846 that the Godavery project was sanctioned. The execution of the latter project involved the building of 21 miles of head weir, 1½ miles of embankments, three canal heads and sets of undersluices. It irrigated nearly 800,000 acres, and the cost was only £1,540,000, all provided out of revenue. The similar Kistna project, which was sanctioned in 1851, irrigated a slightly smaller area at a slightly greater cost. The East India Company had begun its irrigation work in North India in 1819, by re-opening the West Jumna Canal of the fourteenth century, which had ceased to carry waters in the middle of the eighteenth century, and later carried out very important works in Northern India, but these were only what are called "inundation canals," which get filled when the river they start from rises above a certain height, and consequently are apt to fail in the years when they are most wanted. It was not till after the Company had ceased to exist, and the new Indian Government had obtained in 1869 the right till then denied it, of raising money by loan for purposes other than carrying on wars, that it was possible to do on the Indus and its tributaries what had been done on the Kistna and Godavery under the Company, and on the Cauvery some eight hundred years before.

Even in my time Madras prided itself on being ahead in the technique of canal irrigation, although there was so much greater scope on the Indo-Gangetic plain. I was told with glee of an all-India engineering conference at which the model of a new shutter for head-sluiices was exhibited and explained by the inventor. The Madras representative examined it very carefully, then sat down without a word. The other water engineers also examined it with similar care and burst out into enthusiastic congratulations, in such phrases as "Absolutely novel," "A brilliant invention," "Will

revolutionize head works." When the praises subsided, the chairman said, "Before we pass on, I should like to know if our friend from Madras has nothing to say." The Madras man rose, and said, "It is a good shutter. It is practically identical with those we had in use up to twenty years ago. We have got better shutters since." Dead silence, which lasted until the chairman recovered sufficiently to call "Next Business."

A Pioneer Settlement in the Wilderness

Our second village was not served by any road. We got to it by making a beeline across dry land from which the thin crops it bore had been reaped, following a track marked by the wheels of ox-carts. It lay in a little hollow, more or less shaded by trees, and had its own tank which had been constructed something less than a hundred years before. We sat on the bund, and presently an old gentleman came along with whom we got into conversation. He was one of the village magnates, being the son of one of the original pioneers, and he had a holding of eight acres of wet land, and a much bigger holding of dry land, but he had fallen on evil times. Years ago he had borrowed money, for the improvement of his holding as he said, but Boag suspected it was really for the marriage of one of his sons. He had, he said, paid back most of the loan, but the moneylender sued him for the whole with accumulated interest, swearing that nothing had been paid, and had won his case. Now the land was heavily burdened, and would be a very poor inheritance for his six sons and twenty-four grandsons, each of whom, when the time came, would be entitled to an equal share of the estate. I asked Boag if it were probable that the story of the swindling moneylender was true. It was most probable, he said. In such cases the honest man is apt to trust to the justice of his cause, the sharper to cook the evidence and suborn witnesses and win the case.

The villagers welcomed us with customary Indian hospitality, giving us hot milk and simple comestibles, and asked us to forward their petitions for the making of a road to give them access to the rest of the world in wet weather, and an elementary school. I asked whether they would be willing to build the school if the Government provided teachers, and they said there would be no difficulty in building one of sticks and palm leaves and keeping



CORNER IN TEMPORARY VILLAGE OCCUPIED WHILE PALNI WAS
EVACUATED FOR CLEANSING FROM PLAGUE



PALNI, YOUNG COWS GRAZING ON PADDY STUBBLE

it in repair, but they could not manage a brick-and-tiled school house. When I got back to Madras I advocated the establishment of elementary schools in villages where they were not in existence on this economical plan, but the idea was denounced by the Chief Enginner as a vile heresy. He had his model plans for schools, and if they were too costly, the villagers might go without. The fact that the cheap style produced a cooler building and much more comfortable conditions for teachers and children did not weigh with him as it did with me. But perhaps he had never made the comparison for himself.

The other petition seemed equally reasonable. In dry weather it was easy enough to reach the nearest metalled road for foot passenger, or ox-cart, or, for that matter, as I had found, for a bicycle. But after the rains it was otherwise. The soil was a stiff clay, which when wet, they said, stuck to cart wheels or to the feet of pedestrians, making the journey almost impossible.

Some years later I received a survey by a student of a village very similar to this one, but in an earlier stage of its development. It was the only survey I ever got which was animated by a spirit of undiluted pride and affection of the writer for his native place. He told how in the midst of a large area of uncultivated land springs had been discovered, and water for irrigation made available, how peasants from the nearest over-populated villages had taken up lands from the Government on very easy terms, and lived together prosperously in harmony and friendship. The very air, he said, seemed sweeter there than elsewhere, and the grain better flavoured. But he also gave particulars of the rapid multiplication of the numbers of the population, the families of Adi-Dravidas in particular being enormous. I feared when I read that report that the happiness of the village would not last for more than one generation, that here again the Malthusian Law of Population would apply. With regard to India as a whole, Mr. C. F. Andrews recently in *The Indian Review* drew attention to the intensity of the population problem; he pointed out that among the Tamils in Natal the birth-rate averaged about 50 per thousand, and the death-rate about 15. If during the present intercensal period the same birth- and death-rates prevailed over the Indian Empire, its population in 1941 would be found to have increased by over 123 millions. As it was, even with birth-rates kept down by under-

feeding, malaria, and other debilitating diseases, and death-rates increased by these causes and epidemics, the increase in the population of the Indian Empire between 1921 and 1931 exceeded the *total population* in the latter year of Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Canada, Australia and New Zealand combined, with the white population of South Africa thrown in.

Village Weavers and their Lord

Our next village was more than a village, it was almost a considerable town, large enough, according to the standard of the Presidency when I left India, to be constituted a municipality, but for the fact that it was Zemindari property under Permanent Settlement. The Zemindar drew from it an annual income of Rs.40,000, out of which he had to pass on Rs.19,000 to his overlord, the King Emperor, retaining Rs.21,000 to himself, while the people paid a further tribute estimated at another Rs.40,000 to moneylenders outside.

I got these particulars from the Secretary of the local Co-operative Credit Society, who showed me his books. The society had been formed a few years before; it was on the Raiffeisen plan as introduced into India by Sir Frederick Nicholson, with unlimited liability and no share capital.*

The members had borrowed a certain sum from, I believe, the Madura Central Bank, and had apportioned it as loans among a few out of many applicants, and further proceedings were suspended until loans were repaid, and fresh resources were available. It was clear that little could as yet be hoped for from it.

In earlier times this village, the name of which I have unfortunately forgotten, was chiefly important for its export of saltpetre. It may therefore have contributed appreciably to Wellington's victories in the Peninsular War, and to the downfall of Napoleon, since the superiority of the British to the French troops in fire

* I am informed that in the Punjab where Co-operative Credit Banks have attained their greatest Indian success, the Raiffeisen plan has been modified in outer form, but not in spirit, to suit the Indian objection, a very reasonable one, to unlimited liability. The Banks are constituted on the basis of share capital with limited liability, the shares being paid up in instalments; but shareholders receive no profits. Dividends when earned are used to repay the shareholders the capital they have advanced, and when repayment, without interest, has been made in full, nothing further is paid on shares.

discipline was due to the fact that, thanks to the East India Company, British recruits could be provided with live cartridges for practice, while Napoleon's inability to secure enough saltpetre compelled the French to come into action for the first time without having previously fired a shot. At the time of my visit the trade in saltpetre had dwindled to small proportions, but I was shown the method of extracting it, which was simplicity itself. The soil beneath the turf was dug out and washed, and the dissolved salt crystallized out by being exposed to the sun in shallow pans. The abundance of saltpetre indicated that the village had been populated for centuries, but had somewhat shifted its site, for such deposits arise from accumulation of decayed animal matter.

The chief industry was hand-loom weaving, plain cotton cloth woven on ordinary country looms. The weavers were organized in two communities, one Hindu, the other Mahomedan. The latter were said to be more enterprising and prosperous. They formed little co-operative groups to carry through the preliminary processes of winding, sizing and setting up looms; also, it was said that they could command better prices, since they did not succumb, as the Hindus did, to the temptation of overloading the yarn with size.

Among the workers whom we saw there was a haggard lone woman, who must have been having a hard struggle for bare existence, but who yet had some visible savings, which took the form of such a number of little silver rings, fashioned, I guessed, out of two-anna pieces, inserted right round the margin of each ear, that they were overweighted, and hung down like spaniels' ears. I was reminded of this sight years afterwards, when I read that among the finds in Ur of the Chaldees there was a coffin containing the skeleton of a woman with a heap of little silver rings on each side of the skull, for which no explanation had been suggested. The ancient Chaldean dame had apparently hit upon the same idea for a savings-bank as the Tamil weaver.

I was unable to explore the town of Palni itself, as on account of the plague it had been evacuated and was in the charge of the Public Health Department, whose officers were busy fumigating and disinfecting it, and exterminating the rats, and who allowed no one else to enter. The inhabitants were all housed outside,

with their cattle and other belongings, in temporary shelters, not much discomposed, so far as I could see, by the upheaval. Visitations of the plague, or of other epidemics, are the price which must only too often be paid for the glory and profit of living in a town so sacred that it has become a place of pilgrimage.

Kallans and Irrigation Water

The resettlement of the Madura district which was proceeding in 1916 was of special importance because in the preceding thirty-year period the Periyar Project from which it benefited came into operation. It was sanctioned in 1884, and is, from the engineering point of view, one of the most interesting in India. "Periyar" is Tamil for big, and the River Periyar is the biggest of the South Indian streams which flow from the Western Ghats into the Arabian Sea. On that side of the divide its water was not wanted; and the project was to dam it high up among the mountains where it was already a considerable stream, and conduct its water by a tunnel under the watershed on to the other side, whence the water descends in a waterfall into the basin of the Vaigai, the river on which the city of Madura stands. The flow lasts for ten months in the year, and the execution of the project brought new land into cultivation, and increased the productivity of other lands, and the settlement report had to contain recommendations on the increases of kist that should be imposed.

But this Periyar project had more than economic importance. Madura and its neighbourhood was the chief home of the Kallan Caste, among whom there are two divisions, the House-breaking Kallans and the Cattle-stealing Kallans. The historic origin of these twin criminal castes has never, so far as I know, been explored. There are criminal tribes in the jungles, primitive folk who have been squeezed out of the better lands, and thieving castes among the human detritus of the big cities, which avoid trenching on one another's preserves by specializing on some particular form of theft—thus, for example, it is said that there is a caste in Bombay which steals women's nose-rings and nothing else; but the case of the Kallans, who have a much higher social standing, seems to be different. I think that their present importance, if not their origin, must date from the wars waged by the Vijayanagar Emperors against the Tamil Rajahs of the south,

and that they are the descendants of the defeated and disbanded soldiers of the latter, who could find no better means than theft to win a living, the similarly criminal Maravars originating from disbanded Andhra forces. But, whatever their origin, they were the same sort of nuisance to the peaceable and industrious peasantry as disbanded soldiers have been in China in recent years.

The House-breaking Kallans have largely settled down in the city of Madura, and some of them have found a kindred means of living by taking service with householders as watchmen—one Kallan does not rob a house where another is so installed. Others find employment in the Madura Mill, for the caste rules, while they enjoin theft, do not prohibit other activities. There was, however, a regular epidemic of burglary before the Kallan wedding season, as the Kallan maidens regarded the young man who had no crime to his credit as ineligible. An English resident told me that he asked his Kallan watchman if he ever burgled a house. His answer was "Not now, sir, I am too old, I have to leave it to the young ones. But" (dropping his voice to a whisper) "if there is anything you want from one of those bungalows across the river, I will get it for you."

The cattle-thieving caste had been the more troublesome. Extraordinary stories are told of their skill in making stolen cattle travel great distances in a single night and concealing them, and covering up their tracks. The police were quite unable to cope with them. At one time an energetic ryot organized a volunteer defence organization, which was much more successful than the police in recovering stolen cattle and preventing and punishing thefts, but this only brought the police down upon them, and the association was suppressed. No remedy was found until the Periyar water was available. Then the Kallans were offered irrigated land. They held a full caste meeting to decide whether the offer should be accepted, decided in the affirmative, and altered their caste rules, so that henceforward theft of all kinds was prohibited for them. Compared with men of other castes, they were somewhat unskilful cultivators, but they have, I believe, stuck to their new job, and doubtless are improving.

CHAPTER IX

THE CITY OF MADURA

FROM Palni I went to Madura, the greatest city south of Madras, with a population in 1921 of over 138,000, as against its next competitor, Trichinopoly, with 120,000. Of all Indian towns with populations exceeding 100,000 it had the highest proportion of Hindus to Mahomedans. My visit was to those of the staff of the American Mission College who were still in Madura in spite of the fact that the College was in vacation, and especially to Mr. A. J. Saunders, an Australian who had charge of the Economics department. Accordingly our first concern was with the manufacturing population.

The Madura cotton mill was a British enterprise, one of three under the management of Messrs. Harvey & Co., the other two being situated respectively at Tuticorin, the chief place of export for Tinnevelly cottons, and Ambasamudram in the upper valley of the Tambrapani river, which is remarkable in that, unassisted by a storage reservoir, it is a constant source of water power. Mr. Harvey, the head of the firm, was in Madura and showed me over his special pride being the sanitary equipment. He also had much to say about the enquiry I was about to undertake on behalf of the Director of Agriculture, as it had to do with the quality of cotton grown in the area from which his mills got their supplies.

Mr. Saunders was chiefly interested in the ancient handicraft industries of Madura, and their new developments. The important ones were the weaving and dyeing of cotton cloth and silk weaving. Each of these industries was chiefly in the hands of the Sourashtras, who claim to be Brahmins, but whom the Brahmins deem to be Sudras; the Madras Government, on being appealed to, classed them as Vaisyas. Their hereditary occupation is silk weaving, and their original home was Gujerat, of which Sourashtra is another name, whence they were driven by early Mahomedan invasions, and, after making temporary halts in various intervening places, they ultimately settled in the far south, and particularly in Madura and Kumbakonam. In Madura, at least, they formed an organized

community, with common funds for religious worship, education and mutual help. For some years before the war their economic condition had been on the up-grade, partly because the increasing wealth of India had improved the market for patterned silks, but still more through the enterprise of Mr. Tulisa Ram, who initiated the use among them of German synthetic dyes. With Saunders I paid a visit to Tulisa Ram, who explained to me the grounds on which the claim to rank as Brahmins was based. These seemed to be chiefly their elaborate rules for personal cleanliness, and particularly for cleaning teeth. We also visited dyers (though they were having a very slack time) producing one of their specialities, red spots on a white ground, and hand-loom weavers working the pit loom; but I failed to get any reliable information about costs and earnings and living expenses. Such enquiries are naturally very difficult, but they are possible for a man who has the requisite qualities. Professor G. Ranga (known as an undergraduate in Oxford as G. Ranga Nayakulu* and now a member of the Legislative Assembly) succeeded in obtaining family budgets from two hundred South Indian weavers, but in order to do this he had to get into personal touch with each in turn. His method was to have a talk with the man, whether master-weaver or wage-earner, first, then separately with his wife, his employer or the merchant with whom he dealt, and with the neighbours, and to reject the statements as unsatisfactory unless they tallied. Obviously much enthusiasm for the task, together with tact and perseverance, were needed for its accomplishment.

From the historic point of view Madura is one of the most interesting cities in India. For long it was the chief centre of Tamil culture. Its special glories are the great temple of Siva and Menakshi, the palace of Tirumalai Naik, and a certain beautiful great tank, with its appropriate sacred islet in the centre, all of which are kept in excellent repair; and to these we should add three still more ancient remains which need no such care. These last are huge rocks at a little distance from the city, the Elephant, the Serpent and the Crocodile. They are so called, not merely because they resemble those animals in shape, but because they

* Nayakulu is the honorific Telugu plural of Nayak or Naik. The Naiks are a kindred caste with the Reddis, but they are not found south of Madras in any appreciable numbers.

were once living monsters, a live elephant, serpent and crocodile of a hundred times the natural size and might, created by Jain magicians in order to destroy the city and convert the inhabitants to their heresy. But the Jains were foiled, for Siva came to the rescue of the true believers, and converted the terrible monsters into rocks.

I was content to see those rocks from a distance, but I was glad to pay a visit to the sacred tank, which is associated with a legend that no doubt has some historical basis. The two special glories of Tamil literature are Kamban's *Ramayana*, declared by Tamilians to be a much finer epic than the better-known Sanscrit *Ramayana*, and the Kural of Tiruvallavar, to which date of about A.D. 400 is assigned. The latter is a series of rhymed couplets dealing with ethical principles. It has been translated into English verse by Dr. G. Pope, the great pioneer of Tamil studies in England, and is greatly esteemed by missionaries, who see in it decided traces of the infiltration of Christian teaching. Tiruvallavar was a native of Mylapore, now part of the city of Madras, of a weaver caste regarded by Brahmins as almost untouchable, which, having at best merely a Sudra status, was excluded from the privilege of being taught to read and write. Nevertheless he mastered those arts, wrote his poem, and when he had completed it set off with it to the sacred capital and University city. He arrived at Madura on the day when the learned Brahmin pandits assembled in their annual Convocation, on which day they embarked in a sacred barge on the tank to hold their conference on the islet. Tiruvallavar claimed the right to embark with them, they scoffed at him. He said, "If you will not take me, at least take my poem," and he threw his manuscript into the barge. Under the weight of the wisdom and learning which he had embodied in it the barge sank, the Brahmins floundered in the water, and scrambled out dripping, but the manuscript came again to the surface and floated to where the poet was standing on the brink, neither damaged nor even wet. The gods had spoken, and due honour has ever since been paid to the Sudra poet. In the spring of 1935, a "Tiruvallavar Day" was instituted in Madras, and a society formed in his honour for the study of ancient and promotion of modern Tamil literature, the leader being the Swami Vedachalam, for long Tamil pundit in Madras Christian College.



MADURA, STREET SCENE, WOMEN ASSEMBLED AT WELL



MADURA, GOPURAM OF SIVA—MENAKSHI TEMPLE

Part of the great palace of Tirumalai Naik is still in use for governmental offices, the main part being a lofty hall with magnificent pillars. Tirumalai Naik is the most famous of the Telugu Rajahs who ruled in Madura as viceroys of the Andhra emperors. Of one of these, whether the great Naik or another, the tale is told that when someone boasted to him about the prowess of the House-breaking Kallans, he declared that if anyone could steal his jewels he would make a present of them to the thief. He then put them all on when he went to bed, and had his bed hoisted by ropes and pulleys half-way to the roof of the palace hall, which he had surrounded by guards. Nevertheless a Kallan slipped through the cordon, climbed to the roof, descended by the ropes, got the jewels, even the nose-rings, earrings, and toe-rings, without waking the owner. Next morning he presented himself at the durbar, and displayed his spoils. The Rajah gave them to him according to his promise, and then had him executed for touching the royal person without permission, and resumed possession in accordance with the law by which the property of criminals condemned to death reverts to the Crown.

The Patient Lovers

During my three days at Madura the city was rapidly filling up with pilgrims for the great annual festival of Siva and Menakshi. I could not stop for it, as I was due at the Agricultural Department's cotton farm at Koilpatti in the Tinnevelly District, but when I cycled in the evening to join my train I had to pick my way through the streets between the recumbent forms of sleepers.

Siva and Menakshi, supreme god and more ancient goddess, live together in the innermost precincts of the temple whose four great Gopurams* tower high above the city, and form a landmark visible over many miles of plain. For many centuries they have loved and desired to marry, every year their priests have endeavoured to celebrate the wedding, never yet have they succeeded. The presence of Menakshi's brother, who lives on the other side of the Vaigai, is necessary. Accordingly a day is fixed in April,

* Towers over entrance porches, the loftiest portions of South Indian temples, of oblong shape, richly decorated with successive entablatures of statuary in stone or terra-cotta.

when the Vaigai is dry, for an invitation to be sent to him to come to Madura and give the long-expectant bridal pair his blessing. He always accepts graciously, and on the appointed day all Madura, and many thousands of pilgrims, assemble in the bed of the river to escort him. He comes in his car dragged by worshippers, and descends the bank. But it has hitherto invariably happened that while he is making the slow and toilsome passage across the sandy river bed that some evil omen, a sneeze perhaps, forbids the completion of the journey; he returns home, and Siva and Menakshi have to wait yet another year. What would happen if they did achieve the accomplishment of their desires? Would it be a signal for some great event? The dynamic force of religion is incalculable.

But here comes the main point of my story. For long, with distressing regularity, outbreaks of cholera followed the festival. The visitors who camped in the bed of the river got their drinking water by digging in the sand, and they entertained the same sanitary ideas as those of the people of Eruvelliipet and the other villages along the Malattar and Pennar rivers, and the police could not prevent them from acting accordingly. Then came the late Sir (then Mr.) G. F. Paddison as Collector. He went to the two colleges, the American College and the municipal Madura College, addressed the students, and invited them to form themselves into a volunteer force. The sanitary regulations which should be enforced were explained to them, and they were asked to make their meaning clear to the pilgrims; they were given badges, and the police were ordered to act in co-operation with them. If persuasion failed, coercion was to be used, and for this purpose the police were to be called in, but the police were not to interfere until the volunteers requested their help. That year and since, there had been no cholera. Needless to say the American College men were enthusiastic admirers of their Collector.

I had heard before of Paddison in the Madras Club, where he was affectionately known as "Old Paddy," and regarded as the sort of district officer whom a young civilian might best take as his exemplar. He was said there to have taken a double first at Oxford, and while a bachelor to have been so careless about his clothes that when he was posted in some outlying part of the district his superior officer always took with him a supply of thread

and buttons when he paid him a visit of inspection, and set a servant on to the job of sewing the buttons on, in the hope that some would stick till he came again!

About a year after my first visit to Madura I went there a second time and then met Paddison, as he took the chair for me at a public lecture I was asked to give. My subject was the social value of cities, and I dwelt upon the apparent paradox that whereas cities were more subject than villages to diseases, the increase of the proportion of city dwellers tended to improve the general standard of longevity, because the very intensification of an undeniable evil aroused the resolve to combat it. I began by quoting a statement that the only justification for the existence of cities above a certain size was that no smaller community would be sufficient to maintain a theatre and an opera house. That was the point that Paddison commented on. He said that I was mistaken if I supposed that Madura did not boast of that justification; if I would accept the invitation I could be invited to both dramatic and operatic performances. I was astonished; but I did not feel that I could make enough out of Tamil drama or opera for it to be worth while to accept.

Later on I got to know Paddison well, as during part of my last year in Madras we both had offices in the same building. He talked both Tamil and Telugu like a native, in either the literary or the vulgar styles. One day as he entered the building a missionary who had been waiting for his arrival cried out, "Why, it was you talking Telugu outside; I thought it was a coolie." He was tall, broad, and rather heavily built, but quick in his movements, very active and energetic. He had a tennis court made in the compound of the house where our offices were, for the benefit of his staff, one of whom was good both at tennis and cricket, and a regular choice for the Indian team in the annual cricket match against Europeans. I always had him for my partner when I played, being myself always the weakest player on the court, and Paddison, if he also was playing, as an opponent; whether as partner or opponent he had the quality of calling out one's best efforts and diffusing an atmosphere of enthusiasm and enjoyment. Of his Indian career during the rest of my time in Madras I shall say more later; his untimely death in Africa while still at the height of his powers was a sad misfortune.

The Madura Temple.

I visited the Menakshi-Siva temple once by day by myself, and once by night with the wife of the principal of the American College and a young Indian Christian. Once when I was walking in the narrow streets of Ajmere with camels lurching through amid tethered cows and goats, I had the feeling of being transported to Palestine in the days before the destruction of Jerusalem. In the Madura temple when passing through "The Hall of the Thousand Pillars," I had the feeling of being transported into some great temple of Thebes in the time of Moses and the Pharaohs, or of Babylon in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, but with the addition of something bizarre and nightmarish. The lines of granite pillars which support the roof on both sides are massive and lofty, with great capitals carved most elaborately and fancifully, and with extraordinary variety. To Indian eyes the general result is very beautiful, and obviously these pillars express the religious emotions of the people just as perfectly as the images of dancing Siva and triumphant Kali. One such image of Kali stood near the entrance, a life-size bronze, marked off by a railing, and bespattered with ghee. It was of magical virtue; married women desiring offspring came with lumps of butter which they threw at it. If the lump stuck to Kali the prayer was granted; if not, the petition was rejected.

The temple was even more impressive at night, lit by the torches carried by thronging worshippers, the roof and tops of the pillars lost to sight. Our guide, though a Christian, was unmistakably thrilled by the emotional atmosphere into sympathetic response. He paused before a great lingam, and told us the story of the miracle associated with it. An aged and pious couple, childless like Abraham and Sarah, were granted, in answer to unremitting prayer, the promise of a son, but on this condition. They must choose whether he should be handsome, dutiful and virtuous, but doomed to an early death on entering manhood, leaving them desolate; or be vicious, but destined to survive them, and to carry through the funeral ceremonies which would save them from wandering everlasting in the waste places of hell. They chose the former, and their son surpassed all others in Madura in virtue and piety, and especially in devotion to the worship of Siva. When

the day came for Death to carry him off, he went to the temple and clung to the lingam. Death came and summoned him to follow; he would not loose his clasp, nor could the Destroying Angel force him to let go, but had to abandon the struggle. The lad returned home to be a blessing to his parents to the end of their lives.

Some time afterwards I met Mr. Alan Carruth, who came out to Madras as a cattle expert, to advise the Government on the improvement of the South Indian breeds. He told me that he visited Madura and made the acquaintance of the temple priests. They took him into the inmost shrine, and showed him the living representative of Siva. He looked, and recognized a Jersey bull!

The Nattukottai Chettis

The Menakshi temple was built in the sixteenth century, but the architectural tradition of which it is so fine an example is probably extremely ancient, and it is also in full vigour at the present day, thanks largely to the liberal patronage of the Nattukottai Chettis, who give tithes of their profits to Siva, devoting the money mainly to the repair and building and rebuilding of Saivite temples. They have chosen Siva rather than Vishnu as the object of their devotion because they believe that Vishnu rewards his worshippers only by making them more virtuous, but Siva gives pecuniary and material prosperity.

One of the first people I sought out in Madras was Mr. H. V. Lanchester, the architect, who was then giving a course of lectures on behalf of the Government on town planning, in continuation of the work which was begun by Sir Patrick Geddes when he brought his Cities Exhibition to Madras. He showed me a series of magnificent photographs he had taken in Sivaganga, the city of the Chettinād (Chetti land), of the palaces which the Nattukottais had built and were building for themselves, employing architects, maistries and sculptors who carry on the native tradition, and who do not draw any line of demarcation between ecclesiastical and domestic architecture any more than our medieval builders of early Gothic cathedrals did, or our nineteenth-century builders of the little Dissenting chapels which dot the Welsh and Cornish hills. Sivaganga lies remote from the railway in the rather barren

Ramnad District which lies along Palk Straits opposite Ceylon, between the Madura and Tinnevelly districts.

Some five years later I made the acquaintance of Sir C. Muthiah Chettiar, a leading member of the Nattukottai community, who was Sheriff of Madras at the time of the Prince of Wales' visit, and he had much to tell me about their social organization and methods of doing business. Of all the banking communities of India they are the most enterprising, and at that time were probably also the wealthiest; lately, they have suffered very heavy losses through the slump in the price of rubber, and the bankruptcy of many of their customers among the planters in Malaysia. Sir C. Muthiah was himself, he said, the only member of the community who had received an English education, and he acted for the caste as an intermediary in their dealings with the Madras Bank, now the Madras branch of the Imperial Bank of India. He borrowed money from it which he transmitted to Sivaganga, adding $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to the interest demanded by the bank to cover his risks. This money, together with funds belonging to the Chettis themselves or deposited with them, was advanced at much higher rates to borrowers in India, Ceylon, Burma, Malaysia, Fiji and South Africa.

Nattukottai influence is specially important in Burma, where they control the whole of the rice trade. They have agents in the villages, young men of the caste, who, after being taught account keeping and banking theory according to the caste system, are sent out, when at eighteen they come of age, to Burma, Ceylon, or some more distant land, in the first instance as assistants to slightly older men, on three years terms of service, after which they return home on long leave. In their second term they become agents themselves, and are entrusted with moderate sums of money to lend out at discretion. If they bring it back with a satisfactory increment, they are entrusted with larger funds next term; if they fail, they are given a second chance in the same or a lower grade. Obviously, this method is well adapted for the development of business acumen and sense of responsibility; but whether their activities are really beneficial to the rice-growing Burmese peasants is not so certain.

The same principle of early development of responsibility, without allowing any dangerous liberty, is followed in their

domestic arrangements. When a young man marries, which is generally early, a modest house is built for him in the compound of the parental mansion; from it he goes, when he is sent abroad, to it he returns. As his wealth and family increase, he enlarges and beautifies it, unless it seems good to him to buy land and build a new mansion.

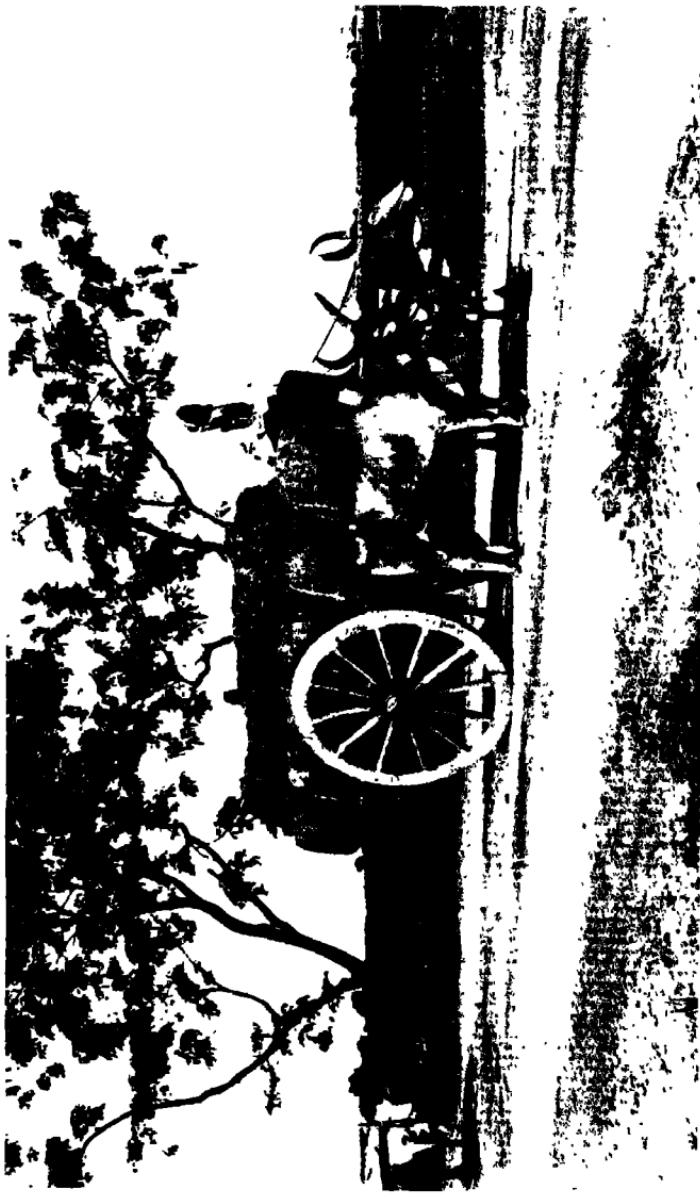
The whole caste is animated by a sense of solidarity; when one member is in financial trouble the others help him out, all being anxious lest the bankruptcy of one should injure the credit of all. Within the last few years, I have been informed, they have created a joint bank of their own.

CHAPTER X

THE TINNEVELLY COTTON AREA

MR. THOMAS of the Agricultural Department was my host at the Koilpatti Cotton Farm, of which he was in charge. Tinnevelly Cottons are of two species, Uppam (Tamil *uppu*, salt) and Karunganni; one of these, Uppam I think, likes the salt sea breeze from the Bay of Bengal, and is grown near the coast, the other does not, and is grown further inland. When the Department took in hand the improvement of the plant, it found that Karunganni was the more variable, and therefore selected it for experimental breeding. The points aimed at were vigorous growth, prolific yield, fineness, strength, length and uniformity of fibre, good colour, and high "ginning out-turn," i.e. a high proportion of lint to seed as ascertained by the proportion the weight of lint after separation by the gin bore to the total weight of the unginned *kuppas*, the *kuppas* being the bolls as picked from the cotton plants. The method adopted on the farm was that known as single-plant selection. As the selected seed sown came up, all the weaker plants were eliminated by periodic weeding, and only the strongest allowed to reach their full growth, and from these again the poorer yielders were got rid of. The plants that remained were numbered, and the bolls gathered and ginned separately, and these were graded by a system of marking according to their merit under each head, and the seed of the plant which was found to be the best all round set aside for the next sowing.

When, by this means, a plant sufficiently superior to those grown by the ryots was established, it was sown over a larger area, and the seed so obtained sold to ryots pledged not to mix it with other seeds, and to sell the resulting *kuppas* to the ginners only on condition that it should be separately ginned, and the seeds returned to the grower, who was, however, allowed to sell surplus seed to his neighbours. The ginners on their side were expected to give a better price for the lint in virtue of its better quality. The first batch of seed so distributed was known locally as "Company No. 1," the ryots not yet having learnt that the East India Company had ceased to exist in 1858. After Company



From *Some South Indian Villages* (1918)

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TAKING COTTON TO MARKET IN TINNEVELLY

No. 1 had been established, Company No. 2 was evolved in a similar manner, and that again, shortly before my visit, was giving place to Company No. 3, when the whole success of the plan was threatened by the advent of Pulichai.

Pulichai was an introduction from Bengal; it is not known how it came to Tinnevelly, but it spread more and more as a mixture with native seed. It produced whiter lint, so that when mixed with Tinnevelliess it improved the average colour, and it had a very high ginning percentage, and growers, paid by the weight of the ginned lint of the crop they sold, found it profitable. But in staple it was very short and weak, and its presence was a nuisance to spinners as it spoiled the quality of the yarn. Its introduction therefore threatened to destroy the repute of Tinnevelly cotton, which is reckoned among the best of Indian cottons, not far inferior to ordinary American Uplands. Once such adulteration begins, it tends to get worse and worse, as in order to be immediately profitable at any time the adulteration must exceed the proportion that the purchaser anticipates, and allows for in fixing his price. In the case of Pulichai, this progressive deterioration was facilitated by the fact that it was practically impossible to detect by inspection which of the kuppas were intruders, or to estimate the extent of the adulteration.

When the problem was tackled by the Agricultural Department, it was seen that the only hope of repelling the invader was to induce the ryots to pull up the Pulichai, for in growing the plants were readily distinguishable. Accordingly the trading firms were approached, and persuaded to enter into an agreement to buy no cotton from ryots who did not so clear their fields. Formal promises were given, but the desired result was not attained. My mission was to find out what the hitch was.

Thomas had worked under E. W. Sampson, to whom was due the chief credit of the work on cotton previously done by the Madras Department, and whom he admired greatly. Sampson had passed on to other work, and Thomas gave me to read his monograph mentioned above on South Indian Cattle. I also learnt the story of Cambodia, the greatest stroke of luck the Department had had.

Various exotic cotton plants came to the Koilpatti station, and were planted in the office compound to take their chance, including one specimen from Cambodia. It lived, but did not flourish. One

day an old ryot who had business with the office, as he came out, looked at it, and said "You should water that plant." His advice was taken, the plant revived immediately, quickly flowered, and produced as good cotton as any grown in the Madras Presidency. It was of the American Upland type, and it is supposed that somehow it originally came from America to Cambodia, and got naturalized there. The important difference between the American and Indian types is that the former has shallow roots, withers during the long dry season of a monsoon country, and requires watering and good drainage; and therefore in India is only suitable for a loose soil with irrigation facilities. The Indian type, on the other hand, has a long tap root, and flourishes only in the Black Cotton Earth soil, which is a heavy clay impregnated with iron. During the dry weather its surface cracks, forming deep fissures, ready to soak in the rains when they come, and store it where plants with tap roots can get to it.

After its first introduction Cambodia spread northwards rapidly. Before I left Madras, the management of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills resolved to buy it exclusively, instead of the "Northerns" and "Westerns" which had previously been their mainstay. But soon afterwards the managers had to report a sudden deterioration in the strength of fibre of the Cambodia lint they received from the ginners, accompanied by the appearance of discoloured strains. The trouble was traced to the appearance of the pink boll weevil (not to be confused with the American cotton boll weevil) in certain cotton fields, particularly near Coimbatore. The life history of this pest was studied, and it was found to be specialized for feeding on cotton plants only, so that it died out if over a certain continuous period there were no cotton plants on which the eggs could be deposited, and that the interval between the regular cropping time and the appearance of the next year's young plants was long enough to starve out the weevils. The trouble arose from the fact that whereas the other Indian cottons are strict annuals, the Cambodia if left on the ground after the picking of the main crop breaks into a fresh flush in the rains, and can produce an extra crop in a second year, though a very poor one. The ryots discovered this fact, and lazy farmers took advantage of it to get a small return from land without the labour and expense of cultivation.

In order to save Cambodia from the weevil, legislation was necessary, and the Madras Legislative Council passed an Act giving the Agricultural Department authority to compel growers to uproot the plants after cropping by a certain date. It was one thing to pass such a law, another to enforce it, for meek obedience to Government is not as highly developed in India as it is in some European nations. The coercive power was therefore kept in reserve while a vigorous campaign of propaganda was set on foot to prepare the way. One ryot hit upon the plan of turning in goats on his cotton fields before the prescribed date for uprooting, and they ate the diseased bolls and the weevils in them with gusto. Before I left Madras I heard that all was going well, and the pest had been got under.

From Koilpatti I made a visit to a neighbouring village on the Black Cotton Earth area, which is marked by an exceptional type of agriculture and of peasant mentality. As a rule, Indian agriculture is essentially subsistence agriculture, villages consume most of what they produce and sell the surplus chiefly to pay their dues to moneylenders, landlords and the Government, and only secondarily to buy goods from outside for themselves. But the Tinnevelly ryot in the dry cotton area devotes most of his land and labour to the production of his commercial crop, and is much more an up-to-date man of business than his fellows on other soils. In the village I visited one or two of the leading ryots had formed a little company and had set up their own little plant, driven by an oil engine, for ginning and baling the cotton. The economic problem that seemed to be the most pressing in their opinion was that of finding some better means of dealing with deep-rooted couch grass, and they had hopes of getting the use of the Agricultural Department's disc ploughs, which were said to be very effective for the purpose.

At Tuticorin I was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey. He gave me a list of the firms with stations in Tuticorin which bought cotton for export, with the addresses of their offices, and the names of their local representatives. These gentlemen all talked freely enough about Pulichai when I called on them. All were eager to get rid of it, except one man, who was quite frank in expressing his hostility to the scheme and in avowing that he had continued to buy mixed cotton. The heads of the firm which he represented

felt differently, and through their intervention he was brought into line.

The task of eliminating Pulichai was then taken up afresh, and it was greatly facilitated by the fact that "Company No. 3" had an equally high ginning percentage. With the help of the Collectors of the Districts concerned the process of persuasion went on successfully, and Pulichai, being found unsaleable, was reduced to a remnant. At the end, to soothe the wrench of the final parting, the Department bought up at a small price, and burnt in a ceremonial bonfire witnessed by festive crowds, the last of the Pulichai.

CHAPTER XI

KUMBAKONAM

ON my way back from Tuticorin I halted at Kumbakonam, to give my promised lecture to the Economic Society. Kumbakonam is the largest town in the Tanjore Delta, slightly exceeding the old Tanjore, with a population in 1911 of 66,000. It is also more sacred than Tanjore, possessing no less than twelve great temples and many sacred tanks, though the numbers of these had of late years been diminished, as the governmental experts regarded them as breeding-places for mosquitoes, and centres for the diffusion of malaria, and had persuaded the municipality to fill up several. Whether in so doing they had not dug equally undesirable pits elsewhere is a question on which the municipal officers could not reassure me. But the biggest and most sacred tank will never be filled up as long as Hinduism lasts, for it is one of those twelve places in which the Ganges wells up in rotation. Every twelfth year, therefore, Kumbakonam becomes for a brief period, which generally coincides with the time when the Cauvery first comes down in flood, the greatest place of pilgrimage in South India. Its turn came in 1921, while I was still in India, but unable to be present. I read, however, the report of the officer in charge of the sanitary arrangements for preventing the outbreak of an epidemic. The pilgrims who came and bathed in the tank numbered about three quarters of a million. Mother Ganga duly accomplished her long underground journey from Benares, and bubbled up to wash away the pilgrims' sins in a most satisfactory manner, though she could not cleanse their bodies, which emerged from the tank covered with liquid mud. That year, unfortunately, the Cauvery flood was late, and so the pilgrims could not follow out the usual procedure, of bathing in it and drinking its water, a misfortune which, in the eyes of the sanitary officer, had its compensation, as the pilgrims were less likely to carry away the germs of cholera as well as holiness with them to their homes.

Tanjore Brahmins and Kumbakonam Health Problems

The social organization of the Tanjore District is aristocratic,

as is natural seeing that it is a rich area whose resources have been very thoroughly exploited for many centuries. Although the land tenure is nominally ryotwari, in theory the holding of land by cultivating peasants under Government, it actually is rather a sort of squirearchy. The Brahmin landholders, who rank as ryots officially, having the same legal status as ordinary ryots, call themselves "mirasidars"; their estates are generally divided into little farms sublet to Adi Dravidas at rackrents, usually paid in kind, the landlord getting from half to three-quarters of the grain, the tenant the remainder and the straw. I heard that in some cases the tenant had to pay over all the grain and got nothing but the straw for his labour. But the mirasidar usually kept in hand, and cultivated by the labour of his padials, one farm, a different one each year, since tenants holding land on such terms naturally exhaust it by getting as much as they can out of the land and putting as little as possible back. Accordingly the farm in hand was thoroughly manured, in order that it again could be profitably let for a series of years, and full accounts kept of expenditure and receipts, to be flourished in the Madras Legislative Council before the Government, to prove that the kist was wickedly excessive and oppressive, and that there was actually no net income from the land. These Tanjore District gentlemen were keen politicians, and the standard of education among them was exceptionally high.

The Economic Society possessed a lecture hall and a library of English and Tamil books, the English books being much the more numerous, and the more frequently read. The members were mostly Brahmins; some of them owned good cars. I arrived in the morning and was taken to see the most notable sights; and firstly, to the College, then in vacation, and its playing-fields. My guides were proud of the fact that the Director of Public Instruction of the Presidency had once been its Principal; they said, "He made us play football, and we said, 'Are we donkeys that he wants to teach us to kick?' but now we are very glad that we learnt." As we passed along the main street we met a noisy procession, led by gross, coarse-looking men naked to the waist except for the cowdung ashes with which they were smeared. The Brahmin by my side glanced at them with disgust, then quickly looked away, and said to me "Temple Brahmins." The contrast was a revelation; on the one hand the repulsive faces of

the guardians of the tradition springing from ancient fertility cults whose persistence in India is the theme of Miss Mayo's *Mother India*, on the other hand the refined and somewhat ascetic faces of the representatives of a new India in touch with at least the thought of England, if not of the world; cowdung ashes on one side, spotlessly white cotton garments bordered with artistic designs on the other.

Next to the Brahmins, the Sourashtras were the most important caste, and here, as in Madura, one man stood out as the leader in industrial progress. His speciality was the weaving of patterned silks on Jacquard looms, and although it was a holiday and his shop and factory closed, he opened them to show me his goods and apparatus. I could not understand the latter, but I duly admired the former, and asked whether the Kumbakonam ladies did not throng to his shop to buy. "No, indeed," he said, and explained that their husbands would not let them, they would want to spend too much. Men only came; when a husband felt he could afford to give his wife a new sari he chose it, it was her place to accept with gratitude and appreciation.

The subject of my lecture was "Municipal Sanitation," and its practical moral the necessity of protecting supplies of drinking water from contamination; for instance, public drinking wells in Kumbakonam streets should not be left unsheltered and unprotected so as to receive any dust that might blow into them. I illustrated my points by giving an outline of the various public health campaigns in England, and annoyed some at least of my audience by saying that cholera had proved to be the best gift that India ever gave to Britain, since it forced authorities to provide pure water and sanitary services, to the great advantage of public health, but that India had not yet learnt to use that gift as it should be used. Of the discussion all that I can remember is the speech of one man to the following effect: "Our fault is that we are too lacking in public spirit. We should never dream of relieving ourselves on our own doorsteps, but we have no scruple in doing it on our neighbour's."

Quite close to the lecture hall I came across my South Arcot acquaintance again—the god Aiyanar. A much finer temple here, and his steeds much more finely executed, but instead of the usual two horses, a horse and an elephant of equal size.

In the following September I paid a second visit to Kumbakonam, and in December of the same year a third, the last in peculiar circumstances. For thirty years there had been a controversy between the municipal corporation and the office of the Surgeon-General in Madras. Every year the Surgeon-General complained that the recorded birth-rates, which oscillated a little above or below 30 per thousand, were impossibly low, and every year the municipal officers declared that births were registered accurately. At last the Collector of Tanjore District, Mr. R. B. Wood, was asked to report, and he confirmed the local contention, but still the central office was unconvinced. The matter came up before the Legislative Council, and there the suggestion was made that I should be asked to make an investigation. I accepted the task without making any stipulation about payment of my expenses, as the enquiry could hardly fail to be enlightening.

I put up at the travellers' bungalow, and there was visited immediately by some clerks from the municipal offices, who brought papers for my inspection. I put the question bluntly, "Are the births correctly recorded?"—"Yes."—"Then why is it the birth-rate is so low?" The reason, they said, was obvious enough: "There are twelve great temples, and they all have their *devadasis*."

Further evidence confirmed this conclusion. There was still living in Kumbakonam a Eurasian physician, who had for many years been the municipal health officer, but who had recently retired, and was succeeded by a Telugu Brahmin. A young student of Kumbakonam College came to me and made the astounding statement: "Four out of five of the ladies of my community (Brahmin) are infected with venereal disease." He evidently felt the horror of the situation, and that there was little hope of an improvement as long as it was hushed up. I asked the Eurasian doctor what he thought about that assertion, and was astonished to hear him say that he thought it was approximately correct, but that things were worse among the Sourashtras, as the Sourashtra men were equally immoral, and the women had less idea of taking care of themselves. The acting medical officer would only say that Kumbakonam was not as bad in this respect as Rangoon, where he had practised, which, he believed, had the highest incidence of venereal disease of any place on earth. He took me

over the municipal hospital, two one-storied buildings for male and female patients respectively, and told me the complaint in each case. Just over half were very bad cases of syphilis or gonorrhœa, though only the worst cases of these diseases, he said, came to the hospital, as the people had great confidence in the competence of the Tamil and Ayurvedic physicians in them.

It seemed to me that the surprising thing was not that the birth-rate was as low as 30 per thousand, but that it was not lower. I did not at the time follow up that enquiry. If I had, I expect I should have found that the untouchable Adi Dravidas, who were not permitted to enter the ordinary temples or to have converse with their priestesses, and whose god Aiyanar has no *devadasis*, were the most numerous caste of all, and that by their fertility the birth-rate was maintained.

I stopped some ten days in Kumbakonam this time, and drew up a full report, dealing in the first place with the statistical question. I explained the methods in use in registering births and deaths, compared recorded births with recorded deaths and primary vaccinations, and the rate of increase in the population, pointed out that an allowance had to be made for births belonging to the city but taking place outside, in virtue of the custom of expectant mothers going to their own families at least for first confinements, all leading up to my conclusion that births were probably more fully and correctly registered in Kumbakonam than in other registration districts in the Presidency. I then went on to make a report on the general sanitary state of the city. This part of my report was much less favourable to the local authority, which, as I thought, was very half-hearted in its efforts at improvement.

The Corporation, of course, could not deal with the religious practices which were sources of disease, but it could do something to achieve better housing and a purer water supply, and had, in fact, made some show of enterprise in these respects. Urged on by Mr. Wood, and assisted by Government grants and loans, it had sunk an artesian well capable of yielding a very large constant supply of pure water, but as the cost of pumping had to be met out of current municipal revenue, the plant was very little used. Similarly, the municipality, with Government aid, had purchased an attractive piece of land as a housing estate, but had divided it into lots for a comparatively few influential purchasers, who

thereby obtained pleasant residences very cheaply. On this way of using the funds I commented adversely. My report, therefore, was calculated to displease both parties, and I was not surprised that after its receipt had been acknowledged it was pigeon-holed. Perhaps it still exists, and has lain undisturbed ever since.

What I got for myself out of this work was an attack of dysentery. I sent in to Government what I thought was a reasonable request that it should pay the doctor's bill, but the Treasury officials did not agree.

My second visit to Kumbakonam was by the invitation of Mr. Statham, the Principal of the College. This time my audience included all the European residents, four in number, Mr. Statham, the Principal of the College, Mrs. Statham, and two Theosophical ladies doing some sort of social work in connection with the Adyar community. The College had its annual sports during my stay. The performances were about on a level with those of an English grammar school, and the events much the same, except that kicking the football took the place of throwing the cricket ball. The competitors took place kicks with bare feet, kicking as lustily as if they had on football boots.

CHAPTER XII

THE NILGIRIS AND THE PALNI HILLS

WHEN my first May came, I was urged to follow the fashion and fly to the hills. The choice was between four stations. The most readily accessible was Coonoor on the Nilgiris, reached by rail, then Ooty (Ootacamund), higher up and twelve miles farther on by the same railway, the seat of Government during the hot weather. Mrs. Dodwell, to whom I was indebted for advice on many points, sang the praises of Kotagiri on the northern edge of the same high plateau, looking over the less elevated plain of Mysore; while my friends in the Madras Christian College were still more eloquent on behalf of Kodaikanal on the Palni Hills, and the delight of making the long ascent from the plain by night in a chair carried by four bearers, and arriving at the summit at dawn. I determined to compromise. In company with my colleague, Dr. Collins, the Professor of Sanscrit Philology, I took a room in a Coonoor hotel for May, since I could easily get from there to Ooty or Kotagiri, and booked a room in a boarding-house in Kodaikanal for June.

Coonoor boasted a club with a lending library and good tennis grounds, and held its annual tournament in May. I paid a minute fee as a competitor to get free entry as a spectator, and was promptly knocked out in two love sets. The scenery was very fine, but rather spoiled for me by an overpowering odour of eucalyptus, and when I climbed to the top of the highest near hill, the extensive view I hoped for was blocked with trees. On the ground there were lying bundles of wood ready tied up as head loads, about nine feet long, symmetrically arranged and pointed at the ends, so heavy that it was only with an effort that I could lift up one end while the other rested on the ground. Yet soon afterwards I saw thin little Badaga women trotting down the road to Coonoor with these bundles on their heads. To carry such headloads is an art. It is managed by a peculiar gait which keeps the head almost perfectly level, instead of rising and falling with the stride. The women go in couples, and when they rest, they help one another to put their burdens to rest nearly upright against

some stationary object. When they start again they put the tops of their heads against the middle of their bundles, and slowly move backwards holding the burden to the head, till the lower end rises, and the load is balanced. This is what determines the length of the bundle, it has to be a little less than twice a woman's height.

The Badagas are the most numerous and important of the three hill castes peculiar to the Nilgiris. They are agriculturists and grow rice where streams hollow out little valleys on the hillsides, which they terrace to make little flat plots of land with bunds to hold in irrigation water. Their language is a dialect of Canarese, and they do not differ in any respect markedly from the people in the neighbouring plains. The pastoral Todas, on the other hand, are of great interest to anthropologists; I saw nothing of them except one or two men and women on a road near Ooty, and still less of the artisan caste of Kotas, though Kotagiri is named after a settlement of theirs, a big communal dwelling-house built of cob.

The road from Coonoor to Ooty did not prove very interesting, most of the twelve miles being a rather toilsome ascent, following a valley and rather shut in; but that to Kotagiri winds along the edge of the high plateau with very fine views. I found the little European community there considerably excited, since leopards had been prowling round the bungalows by night, and several pet dogs had fallen to them, dogs being their favourite diet. Wild elephants also had added to the interest of life. Of all wild beasts they have the keenest sense of humour, and they had amused themselves by marching along the high-road to Mysore, rooting up the milestones and the smaller intermediate stones which on Indian high-roads mark the furlongs, and piling them all up together in a heap. Last of all, a picnic party of women and children in a "shola," i.e. a patch of indigenous forest, had been disturbed in the midst of their meal by the appearance of a "tiger," and leaving the food and plates and tablecloth on the ground, had fled back to the club-house, and when the servants were sent to recover the property, they came back without it, reporting that the tiger was still there, sitting on the tablecloth and eating up the jam. It was time, the ladies agreed, for the men to take a hand, and do something in the matter.

I heard later from Mrs. Dodwell that the men organized an expedition, and tracked down the "tiger," and killed him, and that he proved to be in fact a leopard, presumably the leopard who had haunted the bungalows by night, as no further visits in search of dog meat had occurred.

While I was in Coonoor I learnt that at the time of my arrival in Madras a committee of the University was at work revising the Economics syllabus for degree examinations and that its report had been approved by the Syndicate. I was highly indignant that I had not been even informed of its existence, much less called into consultation. But it so happened that I also received an invitation from Sir Harold Stuart, the senior member of the Governor's Council of three, to spend a week-end with him in Ooty. He had for some years previously been making special efforts to promote the study of Indian Economics in Madras, by prompting the starting of a society for the purpose, arranging for village surveys and other special enquiries. I therefore felt sure that I should have his sympathy, and his assistance if there was anything that could be done in the matter. When he heard my complaint, he advised me to go and see Mr. (Sir P.) Rajagopalachariar, the Indian member of the Governor's Council, and tell my tale to him also. I heard nothing further from either of these gentlemen, but learnt in due time through another channel that the Syndicate had received information that the Government thought I had a real ground of complaint. On second thoughts the Syndicate evidently thought so too.

This is a convenient point at which to summarize the later history of my department.

It profited by the misfortunes of the department of Dravidic Philology, which proved to be a premature attempt to enter upon a new field of learning. No professor of the subject was available, and none of the scholars enrolled as Readers showed much zeal or aptitude for the study. The appointment of a Professor of Sanscritic Philology, intended as a preliminary step, thus lost half its meaning, and the position of Dr. Collins became uncomfortable, because the Sanscrit pandits in the Colleges, who knew nothing of the development in Germany of philology as a science, considered that such knowledge of Sanscrit as they had acquired by study from childhood was the proper qualification for the chair,

and Dr. Collins naturally could not compete with them in that respect. The University authorities accordingly determined that the unallotted funds should be applied to the further development of Economic studies, and that the Philological departments should be wound up. When Dr. Collins's term of appointment came to an end, no successor was appointed. He left Madras and found more congenial fields for work in North India. Readers in Economics were appointed from among young graduates, and later, an Assistant Professor; and a special course was instituted at the Senate House for a few picked students leading to a Diploma in Economics, much on the lines of the Oxford Diploma. My own duty was defined as being the promotion of the study of economic conditions with special reference to South India.

With this development of the teaching of Economics in Madras University there came also a notable development of university organization for the whole of South India. When I took up my appointment there was but one university for the Presidency together with the States of Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin, comprising a total population of about sixty millions. Before I left, the State of Mysore had instituted its own university, another was being planned for Hyderabad, and preparation made for the establishment of universities for the linguistic Telugu and Tamil provinces. These are the Andhra University located at Waltair, and the Annamalai University at Chidambaram, which was handsomely endowed by Sir Annamalai Chettiar, cousin and heir to Sir Muthiah Chettiar. The Malayali-speaking area in the West is less favourably situated for this purpose, as it is divided politically into the States of Travancore and of Cochin, and the Malabar District of Madras Presidency.

In all this development the desire to advance the studies of Indian History and Indian Economics was a major factor. But it is likely also to facilitate an advance in the studies of Dravidian languages and culture, which until almost the present day was blocked by the delusion of Aryan superiority, and the mistaken theory that it was the Sanscrit-speaking invaders who created Indian civilization. That theory seemed to me very early in my attempts to study the questions so obviously wrong that I could not forbear from challenging it in my *The Dravidian Element in Indian Culture*, which was published in 1923, very shortly

before the discoveries at Harappa and Mohenjo-Duro revealed the fact that Indian civilization was one of the most ancient in the world, even possibly ante-dating those of Egypt and Mesopotamia,* and that it has had a continuous existence up to the present day, least modified in the extreme south of the peninsula.

From the southern edge of the Nilgiris, across the Palghat Gap, the Palnis are not far distant, but the way from one to the other was made up of a tedious railway journey of long zig-zags and stops for changes, ending with a day's journey by road and foot-path for those who go by chair, or of half a day by a recently constructed high-road for those who go by motor-car. It so happened that every time—about half a dozen times—I went up or down, I received the offer of a seat in a car, and succumbed to the temptation to accept it, though I always meant to try ascent or descent on foot, the idea of being carried by weedy, feeble-looking coolies being repulsive to me. The memory would have been a thing to treasure, however hot and toilsome the actual climb.

The cars themselves found the climb a hot one, for they had to go on bottom gear most of the way, with radiators steaming. They stopped half-way up to take in fresh water and cool down, and always when I travelled also stopped again to replace a punctured tyre. But they also when I travelled always got to their destination within two or three hours of the stated time, and always in coming down got to the station in good time, which is perhaps a tribute to the rising, though still low, standard of efficiency of the Indian mechanic. As for Indian drivers—the story was told about them in Madras that when motor-cars first appeared in the Presidency the proposal was mooted that a school for the teaching and training of drivers should be started by the Department of Public Instruction, but that it was turned down on the ground that no Indian would ever have pluck enough to drive. This was told me as an amusing fact, since Indian drivers were numerous enough, and the great complaint against them from car owners was that they were too daring and reckless.

But might not that recklessness be in some degree apparent rather than actual? Indians appear to have a special endowment

* For an expert and unbiased discussion of this question see V. Gordon Childe's *New Light on the Most Ancient East*.

of that quickness of response which astronomers call "small personal equation." To this Ranjitsinhji owed in his time his supreme excellence as a batsman, and Indian cricketers in England have generally shown the same quality; I presume also that Mr. H. G. Wells based on actual observations his suggestion in *Joan and Peter* that Indians, if given a chance, would have excelled in the aeroplane fighting which sorted its recruits into the two classes of "the quick and the dead."

The hill station of Kodaikanal was founded by the American Mission at Madura. Some of their men when hunting on the hills saw and realized the possibilities of the site, a marshy hollow close to the edge of the tableland from which there flowed a good stream pouring down at all seasons towards the plain through a beautiful glen. The mission obtained a grant of land from the Government, built a dam across the exit of the stream converting the marsh into a lake, built a clubhouse, a school for the missionaries' children, and a church. In course of time other "Europeans" were attracted, so that in my time Kodaikanal was said to consist of two settlements, "Kodai Carnal" and "Kodai Spiritual." The newcomers, who were a considerable majority, wanted their own club; the mission leased to them an excellent site overlooking the lake, but inserted a clause in the lease stipulating that no tennis should be played on Sundays. This prohibition sent the members, not to church, but to the bridge tables, but there they could not be seen or heard by the "Spirituals" on their way to church.

Two tennis matches were played annually between the clubs; the first entitled "The American Club against the World" was regularly won by the mission, the second, "America against the British Empire" as regularly by the Empire, since Saunders, who as an Australian changed sides, was one of the best players in either club. But the best court in Kodai belonged to a little Indian club, it was given a specially good surface by being regularly washed down with cattle dung. Its members could, I believe, have tested the skill of either of the other two, but the matches were not arranged.

Kodaikanal was administered by a municipal council, under a masterful Chairman, Mr. Michie Smith, who lived in retirement high above the lake. He was also the President of the Boat Club,

which owned a boat-house, a good supply of rowing boats, and a number of landing-places conveniently situated along the borders of the lake, which was surrounded by lower, middle and upper roads. Members could take and leave boats at any landing-place as well as in the boat-house, provided they tied them up on leaving; and the President of the Club was said to spend his time on his verandah with a telescope watching for offenders who left them loose, or anywhere else than at an authorized landing-place. One lady was in a high state of indignation because she was fined two annas, and could not forget the insult; she would not have minded so much if it had been two rupees.

Besides its chief duty, the maintenance of roads, the municipality maintained a public recreation ground, which sloped towards one end of the lake; but it was far surpassed in attractiveness by "Coker's Walk," a broad footpath which had been carved out as famine relief work under the edge of the plateau, with noble views over the plain, showing wonderful colour effects. The finest site of all, a little further on and higher up, was occupied by the Jesuit Mission at Trichinopoly, and used as a rest and convalescent home; the Mission had also a training college for boys lower down, visible from the road from the plain, where very large and brilliant butterflies were specially numerous. The Jesuits naturally mixed very little with either British or Americans; and Indians from Trichinopoly and Madras, who had in recent years been imitating the alien practice of seeking refuge on the hills in the hottest months, formed another separate society. English housewives complained that the Indians made a habit of going down the ghat path meeting the pedlars who brought up fresh vegetables, buying up the best at bottom prices, and making them scarce and dear for the memsahibs. Their building of wooden houses of eucalyptus planks was going on apace; rather a dangerous sort of dwelling, as they well knew, for they gave the eucalyptus the name of "flame tree."

I met some of the leading men on one occasion, as there was talk of forming a Co-operative Society, and a subordinate official from the office of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies arrived to advise about procedure and the adoption of rules. Mr. Michie Smith presided, and I joined in the discussion. The objects aimed at were those which prompted the formation of our "Co-ops"

on the Rochdale plan, but our adviser had only vague ideas about Co-operative purchase, and had only been thoroughly drilled in the principles and practice of Co-operative banks on the Raiffeisen model.

Shortly before my first visit to Kodaikanal the municipality had to deal with a labour dispute. For laundry work the residents were dependent on dhobis who lived at the foot of the ghat path, who carried dirty clothes down and clean clothes up on the backs of diminutive donkeys, with little regard to whether they were fit for work or not. The municipality turned on an inspector, and set to work to enforce the law against cruelty to animals; the dhobis struck; they did not consider that any cruelty was involved in driving a donkey up a steep slope with too heavy a burden laid on a sore back. Just about the same time there was a general strike in Bombay, in protest against what the strikers held to be real cruelty—the municipality proposed to set up a lethal chamber to end the sufferings of stray diseased dogs.

As a further illustration of the contrast between British and Indian views as to what constitutes cruelty to animals, I may mention a police court case of which I was told by the magistrate (an Englishman) the day it occurred. A man belonging to some jungle tribe, accustomed to live on whatever food nature offered, walking along the street, knocked over a crow, and was on the point of killing it, when a policeman seized him, snatched the crow out of his hands, and hauled him before the court, on the charge of cruelty to an animal. The prisoner protested that he would have killed the animal painlessly if he had been permitted. The magistrate turned on the policeman, told him that he was the guilty man, ordered the still living crow to be handed over to the prisoner for him to kill, and discharged him; while the policeman, no doubt, marvelled at this manifestation of European ignorance of sound ethical principle.

The Indian attitude on this question is determined by the doctrines of *Karma* and re-incarnation. Every sin bears its penalty, and must be atoned for in suffering. Each incarnation, from the lowest to the highest form of life, is but a step in the long progression to its ultimate conclusion, absorption in the deity, in which there may be retrogression, or there may be also more or less rapid ascent. To cut short that crow's life was to deprive it

of its full measure of atoning suffering, and probably to compel it to be reincarnated as a crow a second time, instead of as a squirrel or a rat.

The curious thing is that while the Burmese hold the same doctrine of reincarnation as the Hindus, Burmah is freer from what we regard as cruelty to animals than any European country. This is true even of Rangoon, which is a cosmopolitan rather than a Burmese city. In this respect the Burmese seem to follow their natural instincts, the more easily, perhaps, because they do not acknowledge the existence of any supreme God, but worship instead the memory of one enlightened man.

The "long term" of Madras University was from July to December, with a break in September, which, next to May and June, is the hottest month in the year. When I returned from the hills I met my two first research students, Mr. K. Ramachandran and Mr. P. S. Lokanathan. Both were from the extreme south, the Tinnevelly and Ramnad districts, both had been students at St. Joseph's College, the Jesuit College in Trichinopoly, they had come out together at the top of the Honours Examination in History and Economics, and they were firm friends. I set them in the first instance to survey their native villages, and then the surrounding districts, work on which Mr. Ramachandran specially entered with enthusiasm. He was a young man of fine and generous character and great promise, but destined to a very early death. He paid a visit to a village near his home early one morning apparently in good health, at night he died of cholera. His place was taken by Mr. S. Vaidyanathan, who joined the staff of Dacca University at its foundation; while Mr. (Dr.) Lokanathan has continued to do distinguished work in Madras University—I have already mentioned his *Industrial Organization in India*.

The Tamil Language

Not long afterwards I gave up the attempt to learn anything more from my Tamil munshi. For one thing I cannot learn languages by ear, and the transition from the written to the spoken language was too difficult. The Tamil alphabet is, like everything else in Tamil, very logical, and expresses excellently the sounds as the Tamilian hears them, but that is not as I do. It has but

one sign for p, b, and f,* but then the Tamilian does not distinguish between those sounds, he says *piddle* for *fiddle*, *āpis* for *office*, *kāpi* for *coffee*. One hard-worked letter has to express the sounds of s, z, sh, ch and zh, on the other hand there are five n's, two l's and three r's. Of the three r's, one can fairly be transliterated r, being like ours; a second by rr, being a rough, vibrating r; but the third was a nuisance to me, and I imagine has been to many other English people, as it is variously transliterated into r, l, and zh. As for the l's and n's, they are graded and given different signs according to the position of the tongue at the moment of pronunciation, but they all sounded alike to me. Similarly there are two signs for t and d, but each is used indifferently for t, d, th and dh, one being dental and the other palatal.

As if these difficulties were insufficient, there is the further one that Tamil is spoken with extreme rapidity, no accentuation, and no separation of one word from another until the end of a sentence is reached. A planter who lived and worked among Tamil coolies in Ceylon told me that for a year he seemed to make no progress in understanding them, and then the power seemed to come quite suddenly. I think that experience is fairly typical.

My munshi also lost interest in me. His profession was the coaching of Government officers for the examinations for certificates of proficiency in the language, which carried increase of pay and a considerable cash bonus which was, by custom, the munshi's perquisite. He urged me repeatedly to aim at the certificate, and would not for a long time believe that there would be no cash bonus or other reward in any case if I got it. I kicked at the Tamil Reader he gave me; it was evidently translated from one of those wretched Readers that used to be supplied for English Elementary Schools, and begged him instead to introduce me to the beauties of Tamil literature, which he frequently extolled.

Elsewhere I have summed up what I learnt about the Tamil language, mainly from Dr. Pope's Handbook, by calling it "a language made by lawyers and grammarians," so logical it is, and so closely it approximates to perfect regularity. It is also of extreme interest as exemplifying a very early stage in the evolution of an inflected language.

* Tamil has a v, of the Sam Weller sort, intermediate in sound between our v and w.

The slight acquaintance with the language that I acquired left me with a strong impression that the study of Dravidic Philology, which was beyond the resources of Madras University, should not be abandoned, but that it might well be taken up by a combination of great universities, on account of the light it could yield on the evolution of language, the ancient history of India, and, indeed, on the pre-history of civilization. For a trained philologist it should be possible to distinguish in the words common to Tamil and Sanscrit those which Tamil borrowed from Sanscrit, and those which it gave to Sanscrit; and hence get a further sidelight on pre-Vedic Indian civilization.* Next, in view of the clear evidence for the continuity of Tamil culture of the present day with that of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, a study of the relationships between Tamil and Sumerian promises very interesting results; and some similarities with Latin even suggest the entry into that language of a cognate element, perhaps through Etruscan.

When it was a matter of introducing me to the beauties of Tamil verse, my munshi did not prove to be an expert guide. He was a non-Brahmin, ready to become an enthusiastic member of the non-Brahmin party when that was organized, and literary education, I do not doubt, had been almost a complete Brahmin monopoly during his youth. The poem which he read with me with special pleasure began with a lament over the civil war and chaos which devastated the land in the time of the poet, and then passed on to a prophecy that a king would arrive from the West, who would re-establish order and give peace and prosperity. Under him the ancient morals and due observance of caste rules and distinctions would flourish, especially "the four qualities." This poem, he said, was an ancient prophecy, which was fulfilled by the establishment of British rule; but Brahmins falsely asserted that it was a modern forgery instigated by the Government.

What were "the four qualities"? I asked. They were the four virtues desirable in a woman, chastity, obedience, humility, and that perfect modesty that makes the touch of any man other than her husband abhorrent and intolerable to the virtuous woman. This virtue was, I learnt, beautifully illustrated by the life of Sita. Ravana, the devil King of Ceylon, enticed her into getting

* E.g. Professor Collins told me that the words relating to flowers and flower gardens belonged to the second class.

into his aeroplane (aeroplanes, I was bid remark, were invented in India many centuries before they were thought of in Europe!) and carried her off to his palace. Her husband, Rama, secured the help of the Monkey God, Hanuman, to get her back. He skipped across the strait, jumping from rock to rock, entered the room where Sita was imprisoned, and urged her to get on his back and be restored to Rama. But this she could not do. Though Hanuman was not a man, he was near enough to one for it to be impossible for her to touch him. So she stayed where she was until Rama built the bridge which we call Adam's Bridge and led across an army and stormed Ravana's stronghold with great slaughter. Poor Sita then paid heavily for her admirable modesty, Rama doubted the faithfulness of a wife who flew away across the sea with a stranger the first time she was left alone, and refused to return when the opportunity was offered. I never asked how he was reassured, but I believe it required a miracle, and the interposition of the gods. Finally she had her reward, for she remains to this day for the many millions of Hindus the perfect model of all that is beautiful and admirable in womanhood. Nor is her fame confined to India. When in Rangoon I attended one of those open-air night entertainments known as "pwes," which included an operatic representation of Ravana's elopement with the deluded Sita.

From the other poems which I translated with my teacher I got the general impression that the prevailing emotional motive animating Tamil poetry was paternal affection. I made as good a translation as I could of the poems. This had to be done in successive stages, first the Tamil words were taken in their order, then the nearest equivalent to a grammatical translation sought for, and finally the Tamil order restored, to get the spirit of the original.

Since my teacher declared that Kanibhan's *Ramayana* was the finest poem India ever produced, I pressed him to enable me to sample it, but it was too difficult for him to translate unaided, and so we said good-bye to one another, we both had other and more pressing demands upon our time. When we parted I had learnt a little about Madras politics from him, for he liked to gossip about Brahmin politicians. Of one distinguished gentleman he said that he had managed to push no less than three hundred

of his relatives into posts in Government service. It is generally advisable, I think, to divide such figures by ten, as a first approximation to reasonable probability. I did, however, conclude from this and subsequent observation that there was too much scope for nepotism and favouritism in the making of appointments, and that an extension of the system of appointment by competitive examination was desirable.

NOTES—I. *The Tamil Language*

A few examples may be cited to illustrate the characteristics of the Tamil language

(1) *Demonstratives and interrogatives*—Starting with *anda* (that), *inda* (this) and *enda* (pronounced *yenda*, which), we note next *avan* (that man, he), *iwan* (this man), *evan* (who), similarly, the interrogatives, all beginning with *e*, for which woman, what, where, when, how many, how much, all have related demonstratives beginning with *a* and *i*.

(2) *Interrogation*—The enclitic *-ā* corresponds to the Latin *-ne*, and, similarly, can be added to any word in a sentence, to show the precise point of the question. But Tamil also has the enclitic *-o*, corresponding in meaning to the Latin *num*, and that also can be added to any word in the sentence.

(3) The personal pronouns are used as terminations of verbs, in the same or slightly modified forms, as when standing separately

(4) *Declension of nouns and pronouns*—Eight additional cases are formed from the nominative by the addition of suffixes. These are not, however, terminations in the proper sense, being mostly recognizable as words.

(5) *Verbs* From the stem of the verb, which is also the Imperative, Active Past, Present and Future participles are formed, by adding suffixes. The tenses are formed by affixing the personal pronouns to these participles. Thus *iru* is “be,” *irukirra*, “being,” *irukirren* “I am,” *irukirradu* “is,” or “it is”

Tamil subtlety is curiously exemplified by the *negative tense*, formed by affixing personal pronouns to the stem without any link to indicate time. Thus from *cey* “do,” we have *ceykirren*, “I do,” *ceyden*, “I did,” *ceyen*, “I shall do,” but *ceyyen* (I do neither in the past, present or future), i.e. I do not, did not, or shall not do, as the case may be. But Tamil also has the negatives *illas* and *alla*, “not” and “no”

(6) *Compound sentences*—What makes the construction of Tamil so entirely different from European languages is the fact that it has no relative pronouns, and that it allows but one finite verb in a sentence. It has to make

participles serve; and this frequently leads to an inversion of order in translation from or into English Thus the story of "The House that Jack built" would in Tamil go as follows, except that active past participles would be used instead of the present participles which I have to use as a substitute

"Jack-building-house-in-lying malt eating rat killing cat worrying dog tossing crumpled-horn-having cow milking forlorn maiden corn-sowing-farmer this is" The use of the Nominative case for "Jack" and "farmer," the Locative for "house" and the Accusative for the other nouns, makes the meaning clear.

(7) Tamil is rich in honorifics, and peculiar in that the honorific plural is used even in the third person Thus one peon announcing to another the arrival of the employer should say not *dorai vandan*, "Master has come," but *dorai vandar*, "Master have come," *avar* being the honorific plural of *avan*, "he" A Chetti expects to be called "Chettiyar,"* and similarly with other castes A letter should be addressed, for example, "M R Ry A B Chandrasckaram Chettiyar Avl" where "M R Ry" stands for Maharajah Rajah Rajchshri" (Great King of Kings, Royal Divinity), and "Avl" for "Avargal," the double plural of *avan*, "he" My Paraiyan servant got letters addressed "M R Ry Tom Butler," but without the "Avl"

II *Tamil Verse*

The Tamil verse form resembles that of ancient Greece It is based on an orderly arrangement of long and short syllables Tamil has no accentuation in our sense of varying stresses on different syllables, but it has accentuation similar to that of the oxytones and barytones of Greek, slight rises and falls in pitch, and these also have to be so arranged that verse when recited makes its own music Alliteration and rhyme are also used as verse ornament, the latter at the beginning of lines, instead, as in Europe, at the end

Verse making, i.e. the making of any sort of verse, irrespective of its quality, is therefore a difficult accomplishment, and the versifier tends to be proud of his achievement even when his verse has no poetic quality One man showed me with great pride a quatrain of his composition It abounded in alliteration, the rhyme was three syllables deep Translated it ran "Mr Wilson is a

* Tamil for "merchant" There are several important Chetti castes, traders and bankers by hereditary custom

cousin of J. R. B. Branson, B.A., LL.B., official assignee, and F. H. E. Branson, Partners of the firm of Messrs. Branson and Branson, and the sons of the late Mr. Arthur Branson, a distinguished Barrister in India, and a member of the Privy Council in England”

The alleged prophetic poem in my translation reads:

“Our heroes, winning heaven by loyal death,
 To-day have perished; all, all, are gone to-day!
 Our sceptred rule, our justice firm, our fame,
 Our courage, valour, steadfast excellence,
 Beauty, benevolence, austerity,
 The poet's verse, the swelling hoards of gold,
 And friendship's bonds, and every cultured grace,
 Have perished now—all, all, are gone to-day.
 Chastity, beauty, firmness undismayed
 Affection over-flowing, patience, watchfulness,
 The mating of twin souls, and all
 The gentle virtues of chaste womanhood,
 And Lakshmi's bounteous footsteps on our land
 Have gone to-day, all, all, are gone to-day!

“Think not of this, nor thinking, grieving, die!
 That all that is shall pass, and new things be,
 Has been decreed. Destroying time bears sway
 By licence of all-mighty Providence,
 That works its steadfast will by divers means
 Were all things ever good without alloy
 No good in aught could be by us discerned
 Did we not faint beneath the fierce sun's rays,
 The sweetness of the shade we should not know

“Besides—

Our heroes dead, their bodies having left
 (O noble gift!) upon the stricken field
 And burnt to ash, to heaven have climbed, and there
 Heroic souls live on, are heroes still;
 The body of their fame they leave with us
 To teach us how to live and how to love;
 The beauty of that memory with us abides
 Through days so dark, disorder, anarchy.

SOUTHERN INDIA

"The darkness lingers for a while; but yet
 Rejoice, and listen to my words !
 A day shall be, when to this vast domain
 From out the West, a king, desired, will come,
 Endowed with wisdom, happy in his life,
 And o'er this land extend his sway.
 Then shall all cruel chieftains tremble, fall;
 Rich thieves disgorge; destruction will descend
 On foreign foes; 'gainst sickness and disease
 War will be waged; beneath his rule the griefs
 That vex us now will flee away.
 Throughout our country virtue will increase
 The goods that all desire will plenteous be.
 In such security new sciences and old
 Alike shall flourish, and the children learn.
 Undreamt of pleasures too will come to cheer.
 The honour of each creed and caste
 Will be safeguarded; peace will rule, and concord sweet.
 Then shall this land be Indra's land indeed.

"Our children and our children's children, each
 Possessing his own right, shall taste these joys."

If this poem be ancient, a question on which I can form no opinion, it may be a lament over the conquest of the Tamil kingdoms by the Andhra Emperors, and a prediction of the coming of a Malayali hero to the rescue from the West.

In response to my request for specimens of ancient Tamil poetry of accepted authenticity and merit, I obtained the following:

(1) The so-called "Body Poem" of Adhivararamapandyan, the Chola King of Tanjore.

"The touch of little feet that dabble in the mud,
 Of little hands still sticky with sweet food,
 Of breasts still wet with dribblings from wee mouths,
 The clambering grip of his own little sons—
 Whose body has not thrilled to these delights,
 He, we shall say, has not the body of a man.

"The tinkle of the anklets' gems and gold
 Worn on the feet, fair as the soft spring* leaves

* "Spring" here means the season of the fresh flush of foliage after the monsoon rains.

Of toddling children, and the lisping words
 From lips red as the scented water lily—
 Whose ear has not drunk in the nectar of these sounds,
 His ear, we say, is like a wooden doll's."

(2) Fragment. The long lost son of King Desaradan, when restored to him, was killed by the curse of an angry Rishi.

"As though a gaping wound within his breast
 Wherein a foeman's shining lance had pierced
 Were yet again being seared with red-hot iron,
 Even so the spoken word of that grim saint,
 Doer of penances unspeakable,
 Entered the ear of King Desaradan,
 With sorrow scorched his soul, and all but thrust
 His reason from her seat. Like one born blind
 To whom the gods first grant the gift of sight
 And swiftly then withdraw the boon,
 He suffered all the bitterness of death."

(3) A king's lament over the dead body of his wife.

"O matchless shining gem without a flaw,
 O heart's companion, apple of my eye,
 O flower and crown of perfect womanhood,
 Where hast thou gone from me this day, this day?

"Beauty of beauties, rapture of the eye,
 Delight most precious, my wise counsellor,
 Love's own adornment, very life of me,
 When shall I see thee? Oh, what day, what day?

"O flesh of my flesh, O life of my life, O spring
 Of honey in the soul, O nectar pure,
 O fruit that never cloyed, to heaven thou fledst,
 Thither the way I know not, I. I live.
 When shall I join thee? Oh, what day, what day?"

Slight as these fragments are, they throw some light on the characteristics of Tamil culture.

CHAPTER XIII

COIMBATORE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

COIMBATORE is the capital of a district of the same name, and is situated beneath the southern escarpment of the Nilgiris, in the Palghat Gap. For me its interest was in the fact that it had been chosen for the site of the Madras Agricultural College and the Government of India's Sugar Research Farm, so that it could be reckoned the second place in agricultural importance in India, ranking next to Pusa. My first visit was in July 1916. Mr. G. A. D. Stuart, who had succeeded Mr. (Sir) D. T. Chadwick as Director of Agriculture, went up to attend an agricultural conference at the College, and invited me to accompany him. The papers, naturally, were too technical for me to understand, and the rapidity of delivery made them sometimes hard to follow. Thus I was puzzled for some time to hear frequent mention of a certain "Mistrarselwood" as an authority. At last I realized that this was a rapid pronunciation of "Mr. R. Cecil Wood," the name of the College Principal.

The College aimed both at research and demonstration, and received two classes of students, young men in training for posts in the department, and sons of landholders who desired to improve the methods of cultivation on the family holdings, the latter not being in as large a proportion as the department desired. The Government was told that more such students would come if the Principal would relax his rule requiring from every man so many hours of actual out-of-doors work, and instead gave more lectures, but Mr. Wood insisted that they should learn to do everything that an ordinary coolie working on the land was expected to do. Each student had his own plot to cultivate, and kept whatever profits he made. Mr. Wood also had his own farm, and entered into competition with the best of the local cultivators. The Coimbatore ryots were reckoned exceptionally skilful and enterprising, and that was one reason why the College had been placed in that district. In this competition, Mr. Wood told us, he always came off second best. One year he expected a triumph, there were signs that the season would be early, he ploughed and sowed before

any one else, the corn came up and grew splendidly, and he anticipated a record crop, but when it was ripening all the graminivorous birds from many miles round assembled on his field and left scarcely a grain.

Mr. Alan Carruth, who had only very recently come out from Scotland, was staying with Mr. Wood, and took me over the College farm of four hundred acres on the morning after the conference. In the afternoon the College sports were held. I watched the preparation of the course for the obstacle race. In the digging of a pit a white ants' nest was unearthed which had not yet come up to the surface; it was like a mass of concrete with long roots extending in different directions, not to be completely eradicated.

A letter which I wrote home to my boys containing an account of the sports has survived. The items which I thought would interest them were the obstacle race and the tug of war. For the former, the pit from which the termites' nest had been dug was converted into a pond with an iron bar fixed across it below the surface. The runners had first to crawl through the water underneath the bar, getting their clothes dripping wet, and then to scramble through barrels filled with dye, so as to come out in brilliant colours, and then, after surmounting other obstacles, to finish up by burrowing through sand under another iron bar.

Both Wood and Carruth were in the tug of war. There were eight teams of eight men each and for some reason the sports committee put them both in the same team. Wood was tall and well built, Carruth, the "anchor" of the team, with his fourteen stone of bone and muscle bred on an Ayrshire farm, could not be made to yield an inch, so the result was a foregone conclusion. One Indian spectator standing close to me remarked to another, "You may say what you like, but the foreign blood will tell."

But then, as though to prove that India also can breed muscle, there came an unexpected interlude. A touring company which had been travelling in the district had broken up, and its Strong Man, with his attendant relatives, had been left in Coimbatore to fend for himself. They appeared when the sports were finished, and asked for permission to give the assembled company a show while the daylight lasted. The special attraction the Strong Man offered was that he would match his strength against a 20-horse-power motor-car, and pay Rs.500 if he failed to stop it.

The motor-car trick was reserved for the *finale*. Before that he had two tables put out, stretched himself from one to the other, with his neck on one and his heels on the other, had a big stone placed on his belly, which was struck with a hammer till broken in pieces. Then he lay on the ground, while all his company got into a bullock cart and drove it so that one wheel went over his chest. For his last exhibition he lay on the ground with a good purchase for his feet, and put on harness attached to the back axle of Mr. Wood's car. The car was started and allowed about a yard to run, then a sudden jerk brought it to a stop by throwing the engine out of gear. As yet motor-cars were very rare in Madras Presidency, and the Indian spectators were immensely impressed. But once, I was told, the car which he undertook to stop proved to have a steam instead of a petrol engine, and he was dragged helplessly round the ground, so that he was humiliated before the spectators and the car owner, to whom he had to express gratitude for forbearing to demand the Rs.500 penalty.

Cattle breeding and Sugar

Cattle breeding was an important part of the work done at Coimbatore, the aim being to produce from native breeds the best possible "double-utility" animal, double utility meaning excellence for milk yield from the cows, and for working power in the oxen. This is, I believe, not as easy to attain as double utility in our sense, which aims at beef and milk. The department was coming to the conclusion that it was only by direct action that it could do anything effective for cattle improvement. The method that had been so successful in England of holding agricultural shows and awarding prizes for the best beasts had been tried in the district of the Presidency where cattle breeding was taken up most successfully. This was a district north of Madras which produced a breed of which the males are known as "Ongole Bulls" and the females as "Nellore Cows." The soil is rich in lime and makes bone, the animals are big and slow-moving; the bulls are in great demand for heavy work, not only in Madras, but also in the Dutch East Indies; the cows are esteemed for both the quality and quantity of their milk, though in quantity they compare very badly with the worst of our breeds. The ryots, moreover, do not leave the mating of cows to chance, they select a suitable number

of young bulls for breeding, exempting them from other service, dedicate them to Brahma or Siva, and call them Brahmani bulls. These favoured beasts are ownerless, so far as humans are concerned, and masterless; they go where they will, and eat what pleases them, and no one dares to say them nay, or in any way to maltreat them.

It is remarkable that these methods gave as good results as they did, seeing that the pecuniary interests of the peasants would tend to induce them to select for dedication the bull calves which seemed likely to be least valuable. But actually the prevailing idea was that the god made his own selection, and that he did so by marking one animal with some visible sign that gave it an appearance slightly different from the others.

The establishment of the "Ongole Annual Cattle Show" was intended to train the peasantry in scientific breeding; actually its effect was somewhat different. It attracted purchasers of working cattle for Madras and the export market, raised prices, and stimulated the cupidity of the breeders, so that they became less and less willing to devote a promising beast to the service of the god and the work of procreation. When the annual show had been continued long enough for its results to be seen, it was found that there had been a decided deterioration in the quality of the animals exhibited. The Agricultural Department then began to press for sanction to establish a Government cattle farm in the Ongole district, but various prejudices stood in the way, and the Treasury Department blocked the scheme. I heard about this conflict, not from any one on the agricultural side, but from a subordinate official of the Treasury, an Eurasian, one of those narrow-minded public servants who so often dominate their nominal superiors by dint of unbounded industry, competence in small matters, mastery of detail, and perfect confidence in their own wisdom. To him the establishment of a cattle farm meant simply the avoidable spending of so many rupees; the question whether that expenditure might not confer thousandfold greater benefits did not seem relevant to him, nor could I induce him to consider it. His mind was too obstinately fixed on the great piles of documents which he brought away from office every day, working through them late at night and early in the morning, with scant time for sleep, and just one short half-hour for rest after dinner, to take in new

ideas. The issue was still undecided when I left India; but then already the intensification of political controversy was making the improvements in administration which would have been of real benefit to the people more and more difficult.

The Sugar Farm at Coimbatore was a beautiful sight. The sugar-cane ordinarily does not flower and produce seed, it is propagated by sticking sections of the cane in the earth. When given, as in Coimbatore, specially favourable conditions, it grows into something like gigantic grass stalks, with huge feathery blooms consisting of innumerable tiny flowers, and, when propagated by means of the seeds, it shows great variability. It was found possible by proper selection, having in view vigorous growth, immunity from disease, resistance to insect pests, output of cane per acre, and sugar content per hundredweight of cane, to establish very superior and much more profitable varieties.



From *Some Small Indian Villages* (1918).

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A STUDENT AT WORK, DRIVING A LEVELLING-BOARD OVER PADDY FIELD

CHAPTER XIV

TRICHINOPOLY

DURING the term following the long vacation of the University in 1916 representations were made to the syndicate from colleges in the "mofussil" that my lecturing should not be confined to those in Madras. The Syndicate accordingly asked me to arrange to visit the two local colleges which gave honours courses in Economics. These were the great Jesuit College, St. Joseph's, Trichinopoly, and the Maharajah's College in Trivandrum.* The arrangements actually made were that I should give a week's intensive lecturing in Trichinopoly to the Honours Class in September, and give a similar course in Trivandrum in December.

My first visit to Trichinopoly brought me into contact with the working of the criminal law. Trichinopoly itself is a crowded town still rather tightly packed within the circuit of the old walls which made it the greatest fortress in the south of India during the eighteenth-century wars between the English and French East India Companies, although those walls have now been pulled down. Its position is one of great strategic importance, standing as it does on the River Cauvery which drains the greater part of Mysore, and receives the tributaries which drain the eastern slope of the Palghat Gap, at a point just a little below the Great Anicut, which marks the beginning of the Tanjore Delta. It therefore controls the approaches to that fertile delta both from Mysore and from the west coast. It has as its centre a natural citadel, a great bare rock like the Rock of Gibraltar, rising 273 feet above the city level, crowned by a temple, to which the only means of access is up a covered staircase guarded by gates at the bottom.

The Trichinopoly railway station is some few miles away from the town, and on a rather bare and stony area near it a small European settlement had grown up, bungalows and an Anglican church, and it was here that my host lived. I had an afternoon and evening to spare after my arrival, and used it to go into the city and visit the temple at the top of the rock. When I came down I saw that there was a football match on—perhaps between

* Properly *Tiru-u-ananda-puram*, Holy Snake City.

St. Joseph's and the S.P.G. College.* I never found out what the teams were—and as I had not previously seen Indian students playing, I got into the crowd standing along the side lines to watch. The game was a fast and strenuous one, but free from roughness, the ground bare of grass and very hard, the players barefooted, and wearing dhotis, rather long cloths suspended from the waist, with one end brought between the legs from behind, and tucked in in front, so as to give the effect of rather baggy knickerbockers which had a trick of every now and then turning into long petticoats, though this, somehow, never seemed to happen when the man was actually playing the ball. I was much interested, and, as I had been taught long before by *Henry's First Latin Book* that the characters of boys are revealed in their games, I was confirmed in my view that the differences between Indian and British are superficial.

A Police Court Case and Reflections on Indian Criminal Procedure

When the game was over, I turned to go, and then I discovered that my pocket had been picked, and my pocket-book, which contained all the money I had with me, Rs. 125, had disappeared. I straightway informed the police, who told me that there was good hope of its being recovered, for a student who also was watching the match had felt a hand in his pocket and had seized it with his fountain pen in its grasp, and had handed the thief over to them. They asked me to wait, and brought the delinquent to me to ask if I could identify him. Naturally I could not, but as the poor sinner was being led away I saw enough of the way he was being handled to see that he was in for a bad time. I gave a full description of the pocket-book and its contents—one Rs. 100 note, smaller notes for Rs. 25, my visiting cards and some statistical memoranda—and was given an appointment at the police court when the case would be tried. But first the guardians of the law were most anxious to know if I could give the number of the Rs. 100 note. I could not, but I said I might possibly be able to get it from the bank. They were so sorry—quite melancholy, in fact—over my inability.

When I went to the court I found that the captive had been induced to make a confession. He had given the names of his

* Maintained by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

confederates, and the place of their lodging; it had been raided and the pocket-book found, with all its contents intact, *except the Rs.100 note*. The four members of the gang were formally charged, the pocket-book with its contents was shown to me for identification, and the case was adjourned, and I was told that any further attendance on my part was quite unnecessary. I was asked how long I should be in Trichinopoly, and when I gave the date of my departure, I was told that the case would not come on till afterwards. I should be told of the result.

I heard nothing more of the case till the next September, when for a second time I lectured at St. Joseph's. Then I went to the court to find out what had happened. I was told that because of my inability to give the number of the Rs.100 note (numbers of Rs.10 and Rs.5 notes are not recorded), the accused were found "Not Guilty," they were given the Rs.25 and discharged. But, strange to say, though the magistrate had decided that they were guiltless of stealing anything, he ruled that the pocket book which they had not stolen nevertheless belonged to me, and it was put, with the student's pen, in the office safe to be given to me when I claimed it. I took it, feeling that this glimpse into the administration of criminal law in India as it actually is was worth what it cost. It gave me a story to tell which could be used as a bait to get further information.

Years afterwards, when the White Paper, which was the basis of the Government of India Act of 1935, was under discussion, the Duchess of Atholl accepted an invitation from the Oxford City and University Luncheon Club, of which I was a member, to speak on it. She had evidently studied the subject with great care, but without having had the advantage of knowing India at first hand. I had some correspondence with her, in which I pointed out some matters on which I thought such knowledge would have caused her to modify her hostility to the proposed measure. In the course of her reply she asked me whether I did not agree that we had conferred an enormous benefit on the Indian people by giving them the advantage of British justice. I replied that my own experience led me to feel very doubtful on that question.

This seems a fitting point at which to give an account of my observations, and the inferences I drew from them.

First, with regard to this Trichinopoly experience, what had actually happened to my rupees? I had little doubt that the police, in the first place, got them all, and then parted with a share of them to the magistrate. Otherwise would the gang of thieves have been acquitted? Moreover, I suspect that whatever other cash the gang had, went into the same pockets. Our own police are certainly among the best in the world, but we should be too optimistic if we believed them to be entirely free from corruption, and the Indian police are recruited from a population with a much lower standard of honesty. Very early during my stay in Madras I remarked to some old residents that it was remarkable that the Presidency had no law against the adulteration of food and drugs. I was told that such a law would have no effect except to give the police further scope for blackmail. I suggested that they should be better paid, as their miserably low rates of pay made it certain that they would snatch at any opportunity for getting illicit extras. The answer was, "You are greatly mistaken if you suppose that to give them higher rates of pay would make them less prone to levy blackmail, it would only raise their scale of charges. That is the rule, the perquisites demanded are in proportion to the rate of pay."

That was the European view of the ethics of the force. A few years afterwards I had the Indian view explained to me. It was after the armistice, when the Montagu-Chelmsford change in the constitution was under debate, and the advance of the Non-Brahmin party was threatening the overthrow of Brahmin ascendancy. Then, in talking to a Brahmin leader, I suggested that their old ascendancy could be re-established on a secure basis if the Brahmins made it a caste rule never to take bribes. He dismissed the idea as altogether too Utopian. The I.C.S., he said, were free from corruption, nobody ever dared to try to bribe them; but every other service and rank, whether of Indian or British personnel, was tainted. This was, I felt sure, an exaggeration, for I could not think it could be true of the Indian Education Service (I.E.S.), or of British officers in the P.W.D., for instance. But I knew there was some justification for the statement, for a young English non-commissioned officer in the commissariat department had avowed to me that he regularly received illicit commissions, and excused himself on the plea that everybody else

did so. Moreover all Indian traders believed that in the shortage of railway rolling stock caused by the demands of the Mesopotamian campaigns British as well as Indian station-masters provided transport preferentially to those who gave bribes. It was argued moreover that even members of the higher ranks in the railway service must have been in the graft, otherwise would they not have put a stop to it?

This argument did not convince me, as I understood the difficulties that encounter the Government officer when he endeavours to suppress bribe taking among his subordinates. A P.W.D. man in the irrigation service whom I met in Kodaikanal told me how he had been foiled. Ryots in his area came to him and complained that some members of his staff whose duty it was to distribute water from the irrigation channels were giving undue shares to the richer landholders who could afford to bribe. They convinced him of the truth of the accusation, and he arranged for the case to be brought into court, but when there, all his witnesses retracted their statements for fear of being victimized afterwards, and, without a conviction, he could take no disciplinary action. The broad fact of the matter is that for any man exercising governmental power and authority to refuse to be content with his pay, and to add to it as much as he could by any possible means, had been the custom in India from time immemorial before the East India Company arrived on the scene, and in its early years its servants followed that custom unhesitatingly. To purify the I.C.S. was a great moral triumph, only won by degrees, by dint of the repeated efforts of the Imperial Government, and to carry that purification into the lower ranks was a far greater task, in which only a little progress had been made when the war came bringing fresh temptation in a flood.

So much for the ethical standards of the lower official ranks generally, and of the police in particular. As for the High Court Judges, whether European or Indian, and the magistrates of higher standing generally, they were also, I believe, recognized as being above suspicion, though I would not venture to guess at what rank the line of demarcation should be drawn. But their duty, as they conceive it, is to give judgments in accordance with the evidence, and if the evidence is false, will the judgment be just?

The procedure in Indian courts is an imitation, and not a good

imitation, of that in our own, with a notable difference; in a criminal case no confession made to the police, or to another person in the presence of a policeman, can be brought forward in court in evidence against the accused.

Moreover, in both civil and criminal cases, it is very difficult to prevent perjury. Obviously the form of oath used in our courts would not, except in the case of Christians, be any more binding than a simple affirmation, and the problem of the substitution of other forms based on the beliefs of the people has, apparently, not been solved in South India. It is extremely difficult to know exactly what oath in any particular case would be effective in eliciting the truth. I was told by a district officer that in one particular locality it was almost always possible to find out whether a man were telling the truth by making him hold a bit of lighted camphor in his hand and step over the body of his son lying on the ground. That was a symbolic prayer that if he spoke falsely his son's life might be extinguished like the camphor flame. Then if, nevertheless, he did give false evidence, the shocked expression on the faces of his neighbours standing round would reveal the fact. But, of course, this procedure is not allowed in courts; it is barred because it has to be assumed that the boy's life would be endangered.

The rule that no confession given to the police or in their presence could be brought in evidence was made to prevent them from resorting to torture in order to secure confessions, but in view of my Trichinopoly experience I doubt whether it has much value in preventing what is called "third degree." That impression was strengthened later. An Eurasian police magistrate in Madras came to me in much distress. He had been dealing with a case in which a witness brought forward by the police gave evidence contrary to what they had intended him to give. Immediately he left the court there came the sound of a cry of distress to the magistrate. He had the witness called back immediately, and the man accused two policemen of maltreating him. They were put in the dock immediately, found guilty, and sentenced accordingly. There was something like a police strike; the procedure was contrary to rule and precedent, the fact that justice was done was no excuse for setting aside the right of the police to have time and opportunity to cook evidence in their own favour.

This over-consciousious and sensible magistrate did not escape censure.

On the other hand the rule about confessions certainly leads to frequent acquittal of criminals known to be guilty, and to the manufacture of false evidence by the police in order to secure convictions. One District Judge told me that he was engaged in a constant but vain effort to cure them of that practice. But one case of which the particulars were given to me by a Civil Servant on the administrative side will serve to explain, though not to justify it.

Mention has already been made of the Maravars of the extreme south, described by the late Mr. K. Ramachandran as "a fighting caste, descendants of retainers of the Poligars of old, who were feudal nobles subordinate to the Vijayanagar kingdom, but practically independent. The Maravars are now employed as watchmen or as cultivators, but are famous for robberies and dacoities."* One of these Maravar dacoits was a special nuisance to the Tinnevelly District. He was apprehended and brought to trial again and again, but always was prepared with a cast-iron alibi. At last a new Brahmin Sub-Inspector was drafted into the district. His superior gave him the facts, and said to him, "It will be a great feather in your cap if you can get that man convicted." Before many days had passed the dacoit was again arrested and brought up for trial, no alibi was forthcoming, and the dacoit was convicted. The Inspector asked the Sub-Inspector, "How ever did you manage it?" and was answered, "Oh, sir, it was a false case!" The dacoit was accused of a crime that had never been committed; he could not counter the false evidence brought up against him as he had countered true evidence in previous cases by arranging his alibi beforehand. But he took the conviction like a sportsman, boasting that he had successfully brought off thirty dacoities without penalty.

The broad fact of the matter is that our criminal procedure is unsuitable for India. Whether it is good anywhere is a question on which there may well be differences of opinion. One eminent Chief Justice is reported to have said, when asked how he thought it compared with French procedure, "If I were accused of murder, and were innocent, I should want to be tried under French

* *Some South Indian Villages*, p. 30.

law; if I were guilty, under British law." Our generous-sounding maxims, "Every accused man must be assumed to be innocent until he is proved to be guilty," and "Better that ten guilty men shall escape than that one innocent man should be condemned," do not work out in practice to the advantage of the innocent. Because the accused is to be assumed innocent till proved to be guilty, the police feel that it is up to them to prove his guilt to the satisfaction of the court. Once their suspicion falls on him, it is their aim to secure conviction; there is no examining magistrate concerned solely with discovering the truth. The maxim about ten guilty escaping, or one innocent suffering, means in effect that while the guilty man has an excellent chance of escaping, frequently not even being brought up for trial on account of the known difficulty of securing a conviction, the innocent man runs a sporting risk of conviction. I once asked a retired warden of Dartmoor Prison, "Do you think innocent men ever get sent there?" and he answered, "Yes, undoubtedly."

That our criminal law works as well as it does is to be attributed to the great emphasis laid on truthfulness with us in the moral training of children. This does not by any means make it impossible for them to tell lies when they grow up, but it greatly increases the proportion of entirely truthful people, and makes a great majority of the others uncomfortable when they deviate from the truth, so that they can only lie clumsily. In India there is very much less of this training of children in truthfulness, and the proportion of those whom we may call good and efficient liars is very much greater, and, in fact, the very word "liar" bears a different connotation. For some months after the attack of dysentery which I picked up in Kumbakonam I hired a carriage, not caring to have to rely on the bicycle. I complained to some Indian friends once that the driver was an awful liar. I could not talk Tamil, he could not understand English, so, as I was living then in the Madras Club, before I started off for any destination to which I did not know the way precisely, it was my practice to call a waiter, explain to him where I wanted to go, and make him give the necessary directions. Then I turned to the driver and asked, "Teriumā?" (Do you understand?) He would answer "Teri," which did not satisfy me, as it might mean "Terium" (I understand), or "Teriadu" (I do not understand). So I repeated

the question till he said distinctly "Terium." But he invariably proved that he had not made any effort to understand. But my friends were quite shocked at my calling the man a liar on that account. They said, "He only says he understands when he does not because he thinks that will please you." In other words the proverbial attitude of the Indian servant. "What master wanting that only I saying," is not regarded as untruthful by Indians generally.

I once heard an Indian Christian, who was also an Oxford graduate, speak on the subject of Indian and English conceptions of truthfulness. The difference was not, he said, that Indians had a lower, but a different standard. The Englishman, he said, saw things as black or white, the Indian as different shades of grey. A truthful answer to a question, according to the English idea, was one that was in accordance with fact, but the Indian standard required that the man questioned should consider what the probable consequences of giving one answer or another would be, and answer accordingly. Thus, to supply an illustration, Indians would not regard Scott's much admired heroine, Jeanie Deans, who refused to "say the thing that was not" in order to save her sister from being barbarously condemned to death, as a specially truthful person, or even as truthful at all, but as a wrongheaded and reprehensible woman.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the administration of criminal law in India is very inefficient, nor that when the Government found its own stability threatened by hostile movements it should have resorted to special procedures for combating political offences which easily lend themselves to abuse in ways that sometimes shock public opinion in England. It would, of course, have been far better to have improved the ordinary administration, but this would be no easy matter. I do not think it can be done unless Parliament and the India Office put aside the patriotic bias which assumes that every British institution is excellent in itself, and is, or ought to be, ideal for India.

Saivites and Vaishnavites

A great high-road crosses the Cauvery by a fine bridge at Trichinopoly, and the Coleroon by another at a short distance northwards, where stands the sister city Srirangam, famous for

the greatest Vishnu temple in South India, as Madura is the site of the greatest Siva temple. The Madura temple is a single design representing one stupendous effort of the time when the city was at the height of its power and greatness, the capital of an aggressive and victorious state. The Vishnu temple at Srirangam began at a much earlier date as a modest shrine, which successive generations enlarged again and again, by building outer courts around it, each one broader and loftier than the previous one inside, and with greater and more elaborate Gopurams, which are towers surmounting entrance gates. This growth by successive stages spread over centuries presumably reflects the gradual increase in wealth and population of the delta from the time of the building of the Great Anicut. I neglected to visit it, though I had many opportunities, perhaps partly for that very reason, and partly because I did not come across anybody in Trichinopoly who was as much interested in Hinduism as the American missionaries in Madura were.

To me what is interesting in religions is not the theological and philosophical doctrines which they profess, but their influence on the minds and conduct of the masses of their adherents. I failed to find any marked difference in this respect between the Vaishnavite worshippers of Vishnu and the Saivite worshippers of Siva, even among the Brahmins, though the distinction between them is emphasized by caste names and caste marks. Saivite Tamil Brahmins are Iyers and Sastris, Vaishnavites Aiyangars and Achariars; the former, when they wish to emphasize their religion, smear their foreheads with cowdung ash, the latter habitually display the *naman*, which is the symbol of Vishnu, a trident, white with a red middle prong, painted on their foreheads, which is, I take it, a phallic emblem, as is the *lingam*, which is the symbol of Siva. But, so far as I could see or hear, Saivites and Vaishnavites live side by side without quarrelling over religion, the only such religious feud I heard of being between two Vaishnavite sects, distinguished by the shape of the *naman* they wear, one sect showing a sort of stump of a handle to the trident on the bridge of the nose, the other the three prongs only.* Once in Bangalore a pedlar told me that, being a Vaishnavite, he could not cheat a customer—that was the only time that I heard of an adherent

* See below, Chapter XVIII.

of one religion claiming for it moral superiority over the other. Siva to the Saivites is primarily the God of Life and Creation, only consequentially and secondarily also the God of Death and Destruction, and so is Vishnu to the Vaishnavites. The two religions, so similar in philosophy but so wide apart in their mythologies, appear to have sprung from very different origins, but to have been assimilated, to a certain extent, by being subjected to remoulding by similar minds. The relatively crude mythology of Siva, Parvati, and their sons Ganesa and Subrahmanyam, compared with the refined and subtle conception of the seven avatars of Vishnu, who in his successive incarnations summarizes the evolution of life, indicates that Saivism is much the more ancient, and that view is confirmed by the discovery of what appear to be Siva emblems in Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. If that identification is correct, one of the most ancient religions of the world—if not positively the most ancient—is still full of life and vigour, as is manifested by the magnitude of the money contributions it draws from its adherents.

St. Joseph's College and Monastery

The two members of the staff of St. Joseph's College with whom I became best acquainted were Father Bertram, the Principal, and Father Carty, the head of the History and Economics Department. Father Bertram was moderately blond in complexion, with a fair rotundity which heaved up and down in a delightful manner when he laughed, which was often, for he had a keen sense of humour, and much understanding and sympathy. He seemed to me quite an ideal head for such a college. Father Carty, on the other hand, was thin and dark, with a Spanish, rather melancholy type of features, a high-minded man who commanded respect for his intellectual honesty and what one felt to be genuine saintliness of character. I never saw myself, or heard from others, any sign that the College was used for the purpose of religious propaganda; it made, I believe, better men of the students who passed through it, instead of Christians; and the same applied to the Protestant Missionary Colleges with which I became acquainted.

How cordial was the feeling of the people of the Madras Presidency towards Christian missions was strikingly shown by

a debate in the Madras Legislative Council under the new constitution in the latter part of 1921, of which I give a report below.* On their side Protestant missionaries are generally keenly interested in Indian religious thought, and have abandoned the old attitude exemplified by Bishop Heber—"The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone"; while Catholic missionaries have always found in Hinduism marked similarities to their own cult.

What I saw of St. Joseph's, apart from the class-room in which I met the honours students, was very little. My hints that I should like to be shown over the buildings were ignored, and I did not care about making a definite request. On one occasion I went so far as to ask for lunch, hoping to have it in the refectory with the Jesuit fathers, and to share their fare, but I was given a special meal provided by Messrs. Spencer & Co. in a room by myself. The one glimpse of the domestic arrangements I got gave only negative information. I had spent an afternoon with my class visiting the manufacturers who turn out the well-known "Trichy" cigars, and getting them to explain how they financed their business, and after about a couple of hours' walking round the town in the afternoon in a very hot season of the year, returned to the College feeling rather exhausted. I begged for a cup of tea—it could not be provided. The only drink the monastery could offer me was Australian wine, which, I was told, stands the sea journey to India better than European. I accepted it, but it was a very poor substitute for the refreshing drink I had hoped for.

The establishment of monastery and college with its chapel and gardens stand on land once occupied by fortifications and the area just outside the walls. In making the garden the monks dug up so many cannon-balls that they used them to border the paths. The monks who showed me round said that they had been fired by English and French guns during the wars between the rival companies in the eighteenth century. He was no doubt right about the war, but the artillery that attacked and defended Trichinopoly belonged chiefly to the rival Indian claimants to the Nizam's Dominions and the Nabobship of the Carnatic. Trichinopoly, however, shows visitors the house in which Clive lived. It overlooks the great tank of the city above which the Rock towers. It was to relieve Trichinopoly, held by the faction the English

* See page 359.

Company supported, and hotly besieged by that with which Dupleix and the French were allied, that Clive made his famous raid on Arcot, and captured and held it against overwhelming forces, Trichinopoly being, for reasons stated above, the key to southernmost India.

A monk who strolled round that garden with me was a fancier of canaries. He had a great aviary, in which the birds lived under nearly natural conditions. He told me that the numbers of each sex hatched among canaries are approximately equal, and that in the wild state they are monogamous, each cock courts and mates with one hen, takes the lead in making the nest, and caters for all the needs of his wife and young with great devotion. But in an aviary this happy arrangement is disturbed, since the cocks who first find their mates are unable to get away into a secluded spot. Whenever they make an effort to begin nest-building the hitherto unmated cocks appear as jealous rivals for the affection of the bride, and no nests are made or eggs laid. It is therefore necessary at breeding-time to remove fully half the cocks into another cage; then those that remain become bigamists or polygamists, but even then each cock allows but one hen the privileges of a legitimate wife—she is his queen, said the monk, whom he serves and honours, the others are his mistresses, whom he uses for sexual purposes only. They have to make their nests and hatch and feed their nestlings without any help from him.

The chapel stood open for me to visit when I chose. It was a high, rectangular, barn-like structure, with a great painting representing the Virgin and the infant Jesus at the end facing the entrance. There were no seats. One or two worshippers came in for a few minutes, knelt on the bare floor, and went out again. Such worship of the emblem of maternal love seemed to me more morally elevating than flinging a pat of butter at a brazen statue of Kali, dancing on the form of a prostrate enemy and brandishing all manner of deadly weapons in her many hands.

Naturally, it is my first course with the Trichinopoly students that I remember best. It was arranged that I should hold morning and afternoon sessions of two hours each on four days, 10-12 and 2-4, and morning sessions only on the Wednesday and Saturday. On the Monday morning I talked for about half an hour, and then stopped to invite questions and discussion. One

student said, "Won't you talk to us about *Indian Economics*?" "That," I said, "is precisely what I thought I was doing. What do *you* mean by Indian Economics?" "Rupees and Exchange," he said. I appealed to the class, and they said that they also wanted the Indian monetary system to be the subject. So I gave them an introductory lecture on that. When I stopped, the discussion started and was still going on briskly at twelve, so I told the students to write down any further questions they wanted to ask on slips of paper in the interval, and give them to me when I came back. At two o'clock I found quite a pile on my desk, I grouped together those on the same point, and gave my answers, stopping to invite supplementary questions or further discussion on the same point before going on to the next. This used up a full hour, so the second hour was given to a lecture in continuation of the morning's discourse, and this procedure continued throughout the week, the subject of Indian currency appearing to be exhausted to the satisfaction of the students only at noon on Saturday. It so happened that a series of fairly well-informed articles on the subject was then appearing in the *Hindu*, and this was the source from which the students derived much of their ammunition. It was all very pleasant and enjoyable.

In all I paid three visits to Trichinopoly, and lectured in the S.P.G. College as well as in St. Joseph's, but I have completely forgotten what any of my other lectures was about.

CHAPTER XV

CUDDALORE AND PONDICHERRY

FROM Trichinopoly I went to Cuddalore on the invitation of Mr. Sydney Gordon Roberts, the District Judge, who after his retirement, which took place about the same time as I left India, took on the post of Reader in Tamil and Telugu in Oxford University, his chief duty being the coaching of I.C.S. probationers who were destined for service in Madras Presidency. I found him a man of extraordinarily active brain, full of enthusiasms, and of eagerness to share them with anyone disposed to sympathize. One of his hobbies was the collection of Tamil proverbs, in which pursuit he doubled the number known and recorded. After I returned to Madras I endeavoured to persuade the University to publish his collection. Perhaps it was as well that I failed, as the University of Oxford later undertook the publication instead, but I felt at the time that a valuable opportunity was missed, since the proverbs that are current are a very valuable aid to sociological investigation. To take a particular example, do not these two proverbs, "The calf of the good cow dies" and "When the stomach calls, you must listen, or forever be deaf," throw a flash of light on South Indian economics?

Another of Roberts's hobbies was the botanical study of Indian trees and bushes. On the occasion of a little dinner party which he gave while I was with him, the conversation turned on German poetry, and it appeared that of this he had a great quantity stored up in his capacious and retentive memory. When I got back to Madras I heard a story about him the telling of which I hope he will forgive if he ever reads this. The Government architect, Mr. Nicholls, had to erect a flagstaff for some special celebration, and did not quite know how to set about the job. Somebody said to him, "Ask Roberts." The Roberts meant was the head of the Madras Government Engineering workshop, but Nicholls had only just been transferred from the Government of India Service, and the only Roberts he had then heard of was Sydney Gordon. So to him he wrote, and quickly got back a long and interesting disquisition on the flagstaffs of all nations and all times, which,

however, contained nothing that would help him in the task of getting one properly and safely hoisted and securely fixed in the ground. I later visited that engineering workshop, and was much struck by the excellence of the work done, the ingenuity of its chief—and, the miserably inadequate financial support allowed to it, which I felt to be a disgrace to the departments responsible.

Cuddalore stands at one of the mouths of the River Pennar, of which mention has been made before. It is a fairly considerable river, rising in the Mysore tableland, and has a course of rather more than two hundred miles. Close by Cuddalore is the now almost abandoned Fort St. David, to which Clive and others fled from Madras when it was captured by the French under Labourdonnais in 1746. Fort St. David changed hands several times afterwards, and only finally came under British rule in 1785. It still possesses an Anglican church which, when I visited it, attracted a moderate congregation from Cuddalore, evidently owing a good deal to the keen interest which Roberts took in all its affairs, including its furniture. Cuddalore is a calling station for coasting steamers, which, however, have to lie a mile out, and take in cargo by means of surf boats. A little to the south is the northernmost mouth of the Coleroon, and the old decayed port which bears the misleading name of Porto Novo, which during the sixteenth century, the period of Portuguese ascendancy, was probably busily engaged in the export of the produce of Indian looms to the East Indies, to be sold for spices for transmission to Lisbon, when that city was the market for all Europe. That trade has gone, after having flourished for many centuries; gone also, after only a very few years' unprofitable existence, the iron works set up in Porto Novo to smelt Salem ore.

Again close to Porto Novo is Chidambaram, the ancient city chosen as the site of the Tamil University. It possesses what should perhaps be reckoned the most sacred of all Vaishnavite temples, having been founded by Vishnu himself. There had been a Vishnu temple in Chidambaram before, with its staff of Brahmin priests. One of these Brahmins had a Paraiyan servant named Nandanar, whose whole soul was devoted to the worship of Vishnu, but all of whose time and bodily energies were demanded by the Brahmin for his service. Since he was never allowed to visit the temple to offer his prayers and do his pujahs there, he turned the



THE FORT, TRICHINOPOLY



GROUP OF SHANARS (NADARS) TINNEVELLY DISTRICT

hovel which was his dwelling into a shrine, marking it with the *naman*, and spent the nights there, and all times when his master could think of nothing for him to do, in prayer and meditation on his adored Deity. Those prayers were heard. Vishnu, by what means I never heard, made his presence in the hut known to all the people of Chidambaram, and moved them to make it the innermost shrine of a magnificent and most costly temple, and Nandanar, presumably, was re-absorbed directly into the Deity, without those reincarnations as a member of successively higher castes, and finally as a Brahmin, which are ordinarily necessary for an Untouchable.

I had but a week at Cuddalore, and visited neither Porto Novo nor Chidambaram, and the only excursion I made was to Nelikuppam, which held out the commonplace attraction of a sugar refinery. The cane was bought from ryots in the neighbourhood; after the juice was squeezed out of it by the mills, the crushed cane supplied the fuel which drove the machinery, the waste left in the process of refining fermented, and the fermentation produced two by-products, the distilled spirit arrack, and solidified carbonic acid gas. The process of solidifying CO_2 by cooling and compression into a liquid, and then releasing it from pressure, is familiar in theory, but interesting to see in operation.

The Nelikuppam refinery was an enterprise of Messrs. Parry & Co., one of the Madras firms of Managing Agents. It had the advantage of a great market close at hand, since India demands continually more and more sugar, and of a local supply of cane. On the other hand it had to meet the competition of the Java refineries, which, supported by the Government, could require the peasantry in their neighbourhood to supply definite quantities of cane regularly, whereas the Indian ryot uses his land as he chooses. Moreover, many small Indian capitalists are enterprising and imitative, eager to push into any industry within their scope which seems to be yielding profits to the pioneers, and two Indian-owned refineries had appeared in the neighbourhood, competing for the local supply of cane, a nuisance to the Nelikuppam business, and, for lack of sufficient capital and experience, a source of loss to their proprietors.

Pondicherry

It is a pleasant two hours' run from Cuddalore to Pondicherry by car along the direct road which follows the coast line through pleasant flat and fertile land traversed by the slow rivers which irrigate it. The distance is three times as great by rail with a change into a little branch line at Villupuram. Mr. Harries, my host at Pondicherry, the local representative of Messrs. Best & Co., sent a car for me, and I arrived about sunset.

To enter Pondicherry from the Madras Presidency was like dropping out of Asia into a little fragment of Europe; its well-built houses and well-ordered streets, and its air of quiet, unhurried prosperity were echoes of pre-war France, and if only a very small minority of its people were French by birth, yet all the adult males were Frenchmen by law, citizens of the Republic, entitled to vote in the elections for the General Council, and be represented in the French Chamber and Senate. Mr. Harries said to me, "I am almost the only man in Pondicherry who has no vote, and I control more votes than anyone else."

The 1921 Census gives the French settlement a population of 175,000, occupying an area of 113 square miles, with only 48,000 inhabitants of the town. This shows a population of well over 1,000 per square mile for the rural area, indicating that most of the Indian urban workers live outside the municipal boundaries, while the French occupy the space within them. Pondicherry in this respect is a contrast with the towns of British India, as, for example, with its contemporary and historic rival Madras, where the European residents have left the thickly populated areas to the Indian population, to lay out compounds and build bungalows for themselves in the outskirts. Pondicherry consequently had little need for motor-cars, and in 1916 scarcely possessed any, if indeed that belonging to Mr. Harries were not the only one. Neither had it the familiar jinricksha of the East; instead, the chief means of progression was a curious vehicle somewhat like a bath-chair, elevated on rather high wheels, known as a "push-push," no doubt because the man who takes the place of the ricksha coolie pushes it from behind instead of dragging it. I thought he had a less exhausting job.

A long pier, resembling that at Southend, stretches from the

shore to the deep-water channel, making possible direct steamer communication with Marseilles and French possessions to the east and west. Pondicherry can exploit its hinterland of South Arcot by exporting produce to France; the trade in ground-nuts has already been mentioned and is of great value to Marseilles. It also exploits its political connections. Its most important manufacturing enterprise was the Anglo-French Spinning and Weaving Company, which exported yarn to the hand-loom weavers of French Indo-China, and coloured cloths to Madagascar, in each case getting the benefit of free entry into a protected market. This Company was under the management of Messrs. Best & Co. I did not learn how much of the share capital was British and how much French, but I suspect that the greater part of the profits went into British pockets. The mill manager, however, was neither British nor French, but Indian.

I also met the Belgian iron-master, M. Gaudart, and went with him over his rolling-mills. They were situated at the southern edge of the town, beside a river, the Malattar I believe, which I had known at Eruvelliipet. At Pondicherry in the end of September it was pretty full and quietly moving; it looked deep. On the farther side tree-dotted pastures extended to the shore, ending in a tiny promontory, making a pleasant walk. As I strolled thither along the river bank I imagined a scheme for the next Governor of Pondicherry who might have something of the spirit of Dupleix for the enlargement of his dominions and the increase of its resources. It was to protect the shore from the mouth of the river to the northern limit of the French area with groins, and build a sea wall, a little at a time, from the south bank seawards. The northward drift of shingle and sand would be held up by that sea wall, and by dredging the river it could be covered with silt and made fertile, while the drag of the current would convert the mouth of the river into a protected harbour, which might, as I imagined (ignorantly and therefore perhaps mistakenly) be made as good as Madras harbour at very slight expense.

As for the French community, which seemed to live contentedly so isolated and completely provincial a life, I got no direct contact with it. The most important private institution seemed to be a branch bank, not always, according to Mr. Harries, as impeccable in its management as it should have been. He had

a story to tell of an inspector sent down to examine into its management, and the effort of the local magnates to prevent its secrets from being brought to light. The Governor and all the leading men, he said, welcomed the inspector with effusion; they could not do too much to entertain him night after night, from business time till the small hours of the morning, while the bank staff during business hours was eager to save him the trouble of examining books and documents for himself. They were pleased to find that he turned up late at the bank, and then seemed sleepy and inert. He was one too many for them. When liberated from a dinner party, he fortified himself with coffee and worked at the books till dawn, before going to bed; and, as I understood, his report led to drastic and salutary reforms.

From Pondicherry I returned by train to Madras. By express train I did the journey of 125 miles in nine hours, schedule time.

Ayuda Pujah and Muniswami

Just after I returned to Madras in the beginning of October there came the day of Ayuda Pujah, an annual holiday, when honour has to be paid to the implements of crafts and industries. My own belongings got little attention, the barber took my razor to do pujah to it, in order to keep the sprite who lived in it in good humour for the ensuing year, and that was all in 1916. When I had a motor-bicycle, that received proper attention, incense sticks were burnt before it, and it was smeared in parts with red paint, and also, as I remember, it received an offering of flowers. University students, I was told by one of the staff of the Christian College, did pujah to their pens, their text-books and their note-books; and as I happened on the day to pay a visit to my colleague, Dr. Collins, I was taken to his coach-house, where little offerings of lights and comestibles were made to each of the four wheels of the carriage. Mr. Bell, the manager of Messrs. Parry & Co.'s artificial manure factory in Ranipet, a little way out of Madras, told me how his operatives conciliated the demons in the machinery. They worked overtime the night before to make the whole factory beautifully clean, and in the morning brought in a Brahmin to give a general blessing, but sent him out again before the essential rites began. Then goats were sacrificed, the machines were smeared with the blood of sacrifice and garlanded, and the meat offered

to them, with fruit for a second course. When the spirits had been allowed to eat their fill, the worshippers feasted on the remains.

It is, I think, one of the special attractions of these non-Brahminical religious celebrations that the general body of worshippers shares the offerings with the objects of worship, and they are not monopolized by a privileged priesthood. I was myself privileged to contribute to the cost of the worship of Muniswami, who is perhaps, next to Aiyalar, the most honoured god of the Tamil country, but who, I believe, receives still more honour among the Malayalis of the West Coast. "Muniswami" is Tamil for "the angry god"; he lives in trees and old houses. When slighted he makes his presence in them perceived, if he lives in a house, by bringing some misfortune on its inhabitants; if in a tree, by causing a branch to fall and injure or endanger a passer-by. In his tree incarnations he requires a little oil lamp to be kept burning in front of the trunk through the night. In Madras during my time he displayed a humorous scorn of Western science and religion by selecting as homes a tree in the compound of the Museum, and another in that of the Bishop's bungalow. But when he takes up his residence in a house he requires another form of worship.

In my last year in Madras I occupied an office in a splendid old house dating from the "John Company" period in "Commander-in-Chief's Road," which for that reason I think must have been the Commander-in-Chief's official residence. In it were also the offices of the Commissioner for Labour and the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. One morning I received a deputation from the peons and others of Adi Dravida castes who were employed on or about the building, asking me to contribute to a pujah to Muniswami to be celebrated that night; they brought a Brahmin clerk with them as an interpreter, since they mostly spoke only Tamil. I asked, "Why do you think it necessary to do pujah to Muniswami? Has he ever given any sign that he is living in this house?" They said not; but that such pujah had been paid annually for many years, and that it was most dangerous ever to omit the ceremony in a house where Muniswami had been made to expect it. To prove this, they told me of a bungalow in Ooty, belonging to an Indian family, who had paid the god his dues, and who had lived in it happily and prosperously for many

years, till at last they let it to Europeans who regarded the puja as mere superstition and put a stop to it. Then a series of terrible misfortunes fell upon the occupier, year after year. I forget the exact details, but I think they were that in the first year his wife died, in the second his eldest son, in the third he was dangerously ill and would have died, but at the last moment he repented, gave Muniswami his due, and recovered.

So I paid my contribution, and the next morning enquired how the celebrations had gone. Very happily, I was told. They had begun at nightfall, after all the offices had been closed, and had taken place in the porch. The money collected had been used to buy a sheep, oil for lamps and arrack. The sheep had been slaughtered and roasted in the compound, the mutton and the arrack offered to the god, and consumed by the worshippers in a feast that lasted till daybreak. I did not observe any ill effects in their manners and behaviour, so I presume the consumption of arrack was moderate, and no doubt a hearty supper on roast mutton, once in a way, was all to the good. I did not regret having thus bowed down in the House of Rimmon.

CHAPTER XVI

TRIVANDRUM AND TRAVANCORE

DECEMBER and January are by far the best months of the year on the West Coast, the days being at their coolest, with a temperature about that of a fine English June, the weather fine, the air dry, but not too dry, the nights beautiful, and the vegetation richly green and luxuriant. It was arranged that my visit to the Maharajah's College should take place at the end of the October term, just before the Christmas vacation.

In December 1916 Trivandrum, the capital of Travancore, was reached by road from Quilon, the southernmost port on the West Coast, then a terminus of the South Indian Railway, the other two being Tuticorin and Rameswaram, whence the line connects with the Ceylon railways by a steam ferry. In 1920, at the degree-giving of the University, I met one of my old students who told me that he had come all the way by rail, the line having been extended southwards from Quilon to Trivandrum. He added that soon after the opening of the line the passengers one night had been startled by a severe jolting, after which the train stopped. They poured out to find out the reason. The driver also had got out to investigate, and he found a tiger entangled in the wheels of the engine.

On my way from Madras to Trivandrum I stopped for an hour or two at Tinnevelly to meet my two research students, Ramachandran and Lokanathan, who had been carrying on researches in the neighbourhood. We had a talk about local affairs; an agitation was being carried on by the Nadars against aspersions on their social status, which, if I remember rightly, classed them with depressed and untouchable castes under the heading "Adi Dravidas" (original, i.e. pre-Aryan, Dravidians). Their proper description, they claimed, was Aryan Dravidians. In recent times their caste occupation had been toddy-climbing, i.e. the collection of palm juice from the cut fronds of palms, in Tinnevelly the palmyra. Elsewhere in South India the toddy-climbing castes are included among the untouchables, but the Nadars claimed that originally they were a land-owning and fighting caste, as their

very name proved, *nadu* meaning land or territory, and had been famous for their valour and loyalty. These qualities had been their undoing, since they had led the resistance to the Maravar armies of the Vijayanagar Empire, and, though unconquerable in the field, had been overcome by guile and treachery and had been robbed of their lands, and therefore had resorted to the one independent occupation still possible [for them.

From Tinnevelly the journey proceeded by slow and easy stages to Manyachi junction, and then towards the mountain pass between the Cardamoms on the north and the southernmost extension towards Cape Comorin of the great Central Indian plateau, where it narrows to a range of high jagged mountains. At Shencottah, where the ascent from the plain begins, the train came to a halt to rest for the night, which I spent in a travellers' bungalow hard by the station. There was a good reason for this halt, since the jungles which fill the glens and ravines of the mountains on both sides are very malarious, so much so in fact that in the maps much of the area of the State of Travancore was left blank as unexplored.

At daybreak the train started again and passed through singularly beautiful mountain scenery, luxuriant forest, from which emerged pinnacles of bare crags, with clear rushing streams and numerous little waterfalls. Quilon was reached about noon, and the coaches for Trivandrum started at 2 p.m. Of these there were two, running in competition, one under a Eurasian manager, the other owned and run entirely by Indians. My Trivandrum host, Mr. J. F. Stephenson, had strongly advised me to take the former. It was timed to do in three hours the journey of forty miles by a good road with only gentle gradients; actually it took six. I chaffed Stephenson for his, as I thought, excessive faith in its superiority to its rival; he had his revenge next morning, for on enquiry he found that the Indian motor-bus had been all night on the road, and had only arrived at daybreak.

The College, munificently supported by H.H. the Maharajah, proved to be a fine building with good grounds on an elevated and open site, by Indian standards well equipped. Its special interest was that it admitted men and women students without distinction, and the girls, who seemed to number about one-fifth

of the total, shared equally in all the College activities except football and similar games. The students of either sex were drawn almost exclusively from the two castes of Nairs and Indian Christians; some at least of the Christian girls testified to their religion by wearing gold rings, of about the same diameter as napkin rings, through the upper part of their ears. I shall have more to say later with regard to the differences between Malayali and Tamil customs which permit co-education on the west of the mountain range which would be impossible in the east; here I only add that in addition to their share in the Maharajah's College the Nair and Christian women of the West Coast also, in my time, supplied a majority of the students to the two colleges for women in Madras, Queen Mary's College and the Madras Christian College for Women.

The "Professor of History and Economics" was Mr. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, who later became prominent in Indian politics. I knew him well by sight, for he was conspicuous in Senate meetings by the frequency of his participations in debate, his extreme volubility, the length of his speeches and the rapidity of his utterance. I have reason to believe that at the time my appointment was made he held that it was both unnecessary and undesirable for an Indian University to go outside India to find a Professor of Indian Economics, and to import a man who had never before made any contribution to the study of the subject, and who had not even seen India before he arrived to take up his appointment. From his point of view this opinion was so reasonable that I could not resent it, and on his side he suppressed whatever adverse feeling he might have had towards me, and was very kind and helpful. I was indebted to him for two very interesting and instructive experiences.

The first of these was a visit to an establishment of "Hundi Merchants," or indigenous bankers who follow traditional methods of doing business of immemorial antiquity. These particular bankers belonged, I believe, to the caste of "Kallidaikurichi Brahmins," the chief rivals of the Nattukottai Chettis in South India; they do not, like the Chettis, carry on business in distant lands. The office was a large room, bare in the middle, in which about twenty clerks squatted along the walls with little desks in front of them, account books, open boxes of silver coins, and candle-

sticks from which wicks, immersed in little baths of oil, gave a flickering and smoky light.

The business carried on was ordinary banking, receipt of deposits, making loans, and giving advances. Dealing in *Hundis*, which are bills of exchange, was a minor activity of those *Hundi* merchants. Their banking, however, was carried on under conditions very different from ours. India is a land of eager borrowers and sparse lenders; the indigenous bankers, therefore, are able to demand very high rates of interest on even very good security, but have to tempt depositors by offering interest at rather high rates even on current deposits, and to supplement the funds thus attracted by borrowing from the Imperial Bank, in Trivandrum, at the time of my visits, from the Bank of Madras. Such banking is necessarily rather risky, and the Trivandrum depositors, who were mostly drawn from the official and salaried class, liked to stroll into the bank in the evenings, and to be assured, by the sight of the rupees in the open boxes, that there was some money to meet their claims if they wanted it in a hurry. Hence the opening at night by lamplight and the display of silver. The bankers, on their side, drew a minute profit from this custom, because if an advance were granted after sunset it was credited to the day's account, and interest charged from the morning, but if a deposit was made it was put to the account of the following day, and only then began to earn interest for the depositor.*

On the second of the two occasions to which I refer Rangaswami Aiyangar borrowed a car from a friend and took me for an excursion into the mountains. Our destination was a "tank," a storage reservoir like Lake Vyrnwy, an artificial lake created by throwing a masonry dam across the narrow opening of a broad valley. Surrounded by forest amid steep mountain-sides with submerged trees still visible it was very picturesque, as was also the way thither, but the spot was intensely malarious, and Rangaswami ruled that we must be well away by sunset before the anopheles got to work. But we visited the house where the resident engineer, an Englishman, had lived, and his grave at the margin of the lake, for he had died on the spot of malaria, at the time the work was

* A treatise on *Indigenous Banking in South India* has been compiled by Mr. V. Krishnan, of Madras University, who is himself a Kallidaikurichi Brahmin, but at the moment of writing it has not yet been published.

completed, work which enabled a large area of wet land to produce two crops annually, i.e. a second crop in addition to the one reaped from land sown during the monsoon rains. The men who built the embankment came and went daily, the engineer was on the spot day and night. I regret that I did not make and keep a note of his name and the date of his death.

On the way back we passed a group of men, women and children of some jungle tribe, small, very dark people, looking half starved, as no doubt they were, making up for the scantiness of the few rags they possessed by wearing innumerable necklaces of various kinds of seeds. Before leaving the valley, but after we had got beyond the specially dangerous zone, we stopped at a bungalow where a young scientist, with an assistant and a chemical laboratory, was carrying on investigations into the properties of forest trees and bushes with a view to the discovery of new and useful dyes. He had no difficulty apparently in getting previously unknown dyes giving different colours, but he had not yet discovered any likely to be of commercial value, and I got the impression that he would be pleased to be transferred to another job.

Distinguished visitors to Travancore are expected to ask for permission to call on the Maharajah, and I was told that I should be reckoned as one, and was given the necessary instructions with regard to my behaviour when the permission asked for was granted. Stephenson, who kept a horsed carriage, lent it to me for the occasion. I had to rise early because the Maharajah gave interviews to Europeans only at daybreak. I came to the entrance to the palace grounds, showed my card of invitation, and was bidden to drive on to a bungalow with a pillared verandah and open doors. In the room beyond an elderly gentleman was seated. He, as I had been warned, was the Maharajah himself; without such a warning visitors had frequently guessed him to be a butler or other servant, and had given much offence by ordering him to go and fetch his master. He rose, shook hands, motioned me to sit, and asked a question or two, in reply to which I told him of my work and my reason for coming to his state and capital. He was mildly interested, and the interview lasted about twenty minutes.

The reason for this procedure is more interesting than the procedure itself. The Maharajahs of Travancore claim descent

from the ancient kings of the Chera or Kerala Kingdom,* and to be entitled by birth to Kshattriya status, but Brahmin ascendancy is so firmly established that they have, when they succeed to the throne, to be adopted as individuals by special favour into the Brahmin caste, and have to observe, with far more exactitude than Brahmins born, all the rules and restrictions which set the "twice-born" above ordinary humanity. The Maharajah therefore has to perform various ceremonies and take purifying baths in the morning before taking food, and also immediately after having polluted himself by shaking hands with a European. It would be too troublesome and take too much time for him to go through these performances twice a day, and his sense of hospitality forbids him, when receiving a visitor, to require him to keep beyond the distance at which a European pollutes, but by choosing the dawn as his time for seeing visitors, he can make one set of ablutions suffice.

Travancore is, like Ceylon in Bishop Heber's phrase, a land "where every prospect pleases," and we may add too, "where man is vile," provided *vile* is understood in its original sense of "cheap." Nature is exceedingly bountiful, offering the means of bare subsistence as freely as anywhere in the world, so that the population living directly on the land is extraordinarily dense. The high-road from Quilon to Trivandrum goes across undulating land in continual gentle curves, so that nowhere does the passenger by motor-bus have any but short views along it. Once when I was making the journey I kept a look-out from beginning to end to see if anywhere along the forty miles was a spot with neither human habitation in sight nor people strolling along the road or driving ox-wagons, but always, before we had got out of sight of one group of passengers, another, or a little hamlet, came into view just ahead.

Rice, coconuts and cassava are the main crops of Travancore. All the wider spots of the little valleys were levelled, provided

* The same claims are made for the Rajahs of Cochin, but both these families follow Nair customs of inheritance and Nairs are included (very improperly) by Brahmins among the Sudras. The Dravidian Chera Kingdom included Cochin and Travancore, and the districts of Malabar and Coimbatore. It was partially conquered, probably in the eighth century, by the Cholas, and the remnants subsequently became tributary to Vijayanagar and in part to Mysore.

with little embankments to hold up water, and luxuriant with a thick growth of paddy, while coconut palms lined the margins. But where Travancore differed from other parts of India which I had seen was that the hillsides were nearly as productive as the paddy lands, for they were planted with cassava, the root of which yields the tapioca and sago of commerce, and which is calculated to give a greater tonnage of human food per acre than any other crop. The sea and rivers also abound in fish. On the other hand the tropical climate, the high and nearly uniform temperature and damp atmosphere relax the muscles, and all the conditions combine to take away from the masses of the people any incentive to exert themselves to acquire more than a bare subsistence. Mr. Barker, Director of Industry for the State, gave me a curious example of their attitude of mind. The woodworkers, he found, were divided into three classes, sawyers, carpenters and cabinet-makers. When he was promoting technical classes he found that the sawyers earned higher wages than the carpenters, but were eager to be educated into carpenters, and the carpenters similarly wanted to become cabinet-makers, though the cabinet-makers were the worst paid of the three ranks, the loss of pay being more than compensated, in their eyes, by a rise in social status, and social status being altogether independent of pecuniary condition.

The Maharajah and His Ministers

The government of the state was carried on in the good old Oriental fashion. There was no sedition and no Parliament. Politics were merely the conflicting efforts of certain castes to secure as many of the governmental positions as possible. Administration was controlled by the Diwan, appointed by the Maharajah as his executive officer for a term of years. The Diwan in office was said to compare very unfavourably with his predecessor Rajagopalachariar, who had previously been Diwan of Cochin, and was then a member of the Madras Executive Council—I have mentioned him above. He had won golden opinions by his straightforward candour. I was told that whenever petitioners approached him asking for this or that he listened carefully, made up his mind quickly, and answered yes or no. What he promised to do, he did; when he refused to do what he was asked, he made

it clear that efforts to make him change his mind would be wasted. Mr. E. S. Montagu in his *Indian Diary* called him "a very tame Indian"; what Rajagopala thought of Montagu is not on record.

Under the weaker rule of his successor the Palace Manager was said to have become the most powerful man in the State, since he appointed the cooks, and they had the life of the Maharajah in their power, and he was the man whom applicants for governmental favour specially courted.

What political feeling the students manifested had no reference to Travancore affairs, and was only a reflex from the agitations stirring British India. Land revenue was the subject in which they seemed most interested, and I was treated to a discourse on the iniquities of the Madras system and the excessive burden of the kist. So I asked, "How about Travancore? Isn't your system exactly the same as the Madras Ryotwari system you are denouncing?" It was, they said, but in Travancore the rates were so light as not to be a burden. I took the next opportunity of asking what the kist was on a particular area of wet land. It was Rs.26 per acre. The highest kist levied anywhere in the Madras Presidency was Rs.22 As.8 per acre, and that only in the Tambraparni valley, which gets two unfailing monsoons per annum, has a soil of rich loam resting on a bed of clay which keeps all the nutriment supplied by manure within reach of the roots, so that it produces annually one very heavy crop of ordinary rice and one good crop of very superior rice in great demand, and therefore, according to information supplied to me by students from the locality, a holding of three acres suffices to maintain, according to customary standards, two families, the Brahmin family that holds the land, and the Pallan family that cultivates it, to whom it is sublet. The difference of course between the State and the Presidency was that it had not occurred to the Travancore landowners that they might secure a reduction of the kist by complaining that it was ruining them by its excessive exactions. If they had made such complaints the Resident no doubt would be asked to investigate, and would probably report that Rs.26 per acre per annum was not an excessive rent for good irrigated land.

At Christmas time the days passed very pleasantly in Trivandrum. Students came in to Stephenson's bungalow in the evening

for tennis and a chat, and one gave me an animated discourse on his religious philosophy, which could, I fancy, be described as pantheistic idealism of a type prevalent in India—the doctrine that there is but one Reality, which is God, and that all other existences are illusion, and that a man's aim should be to realize this, and so lose the consciousness of personal identity, gaining instead consciousness of unity with God. He challenged me for my opinion, rather hoping, I think, that I would argue for orthodox Christianity, and that he would score a victory in the argument. I could only say that so far as I could see his doctrine might be true, but equally it might not, there did not seem to be any way of deciding the question; meanwhile I thought I had to act on the assumption that there was life to be lived and duty to be done, and philosophic speculation was outside what I considered the range of my own duties.

The European community was hospitable in the extreme, and it was large enough to maintain a very good club with an assembly room as well as the usual tennis courts, card-rooms and bar. Its library was meagre, but Stephenson had a good one of his own. Trivandrum also possessed a very beautiful and picturesque golf course, belonging to a club of mixed membership under the patronage of the Maharajah. To go round was a very pleasant walk, but it also gave me the annoying experience that as I was wearing bifocal spectacles, the apparent distance of the ball suddenly changed at the very moment of striking, so that I fluffed almost every shot. It was interesting when going out at night to see the multitude of little lights burning underneath tall trees by the roadside, tributes to Muniswami, or to his Malayali kin, if Muniswami himself lives only among the Tamils. There was a garden party at the British Residency, of course much smaller and consequently less formal and more amusing than those at Government Houses, and an evening party at which all guests who could contribute to the entertainment had to take their turn. Perhaps, in Trivandrum as elsewhere, when the damp heat is trying, and no stranger comes round to diversify the conversation, the memsahibs got bored, and had to find relief by engaging in little feuds, as novels tell us they do. If so, the fact was not obtruded.

I did hear, however, something on the familiar topic of Indian servants. I was dining with Dr. Clark, of the Maharajah's College

on the Science side, and Mrs. Clark told me the story of her hens. She had built a suitable hen run, wired in and fully protected against all possible thieves and enemies, and bought from a Madras poultry fancier a number of hens of the best laying breeds. She took great care of them and they thrived, but they never produced a single egg for her table. At last she despaired, and sold them; the neighbour who bought them reported that they were laying splendidly. This remained a mystery till, for some reason or other, Mrs. Clark parted with her cook. Then the other servants told her that the cook had found or made a minute hole underneath the wire netting, and had trained his tiny crawling babe to creep in and steal the eggs, which he sold to his friends for hatching. The Indian hen is a small bird, skilled in the art of fending for herself, who lays but few eggs and those very small, so I have no doubt that Mrs. Clark's eggs fetched very good prices in the Trivandrum bazaar.

Lace-making in Nagercoil and Muligamudu

I came again to the Maharajah's College in 1917, and by varying my route for coming and going saw something of the whole of the West Coast from Nagercoil, a pleasant town lying below the southern extremity of the mountain range and near Cape Comorin, to Trichur, the capital of Cochin State. Nagercoil was my first halt; I put up at an excellent travellers' bungalow and strolled round, and stopped to enjoy the view of the mountains across a big tank where the road ran along the top of the embankment. Presently an elderly gentleman, obviously a Brahmin, passed by, and I asked him some questions about the lake and the hills. Presently, to my astonishment, he asked me, "Aren't you Dr. Slater?" and told me he had read the reports of my lectures, and asked me to come along to his house for a chat. When there he climbed a coconut palm and brought down a tender coconut to give me a drink. He was a recently retired member of the Travancore Agricultural Department, and he told me that the most interesting part of his work had been investigating the growth periods of different sorts of rice, in order to find a means of getting time enough on two-crop lands, between the reaping of the first crop and the planting of the second, to grow on



THE CONVENT TOWER AT MULIGAMUDU



VIEW FROM DYE RESEARCH STATION, NEAR TRIVANDRUM

the same land a green manure crop, since with the increasing population the custom of resorting to the hills to gather wild green stuff gave unsatisfactory results and became more and more undesirable.

The chief industry in Nagercoil seemed to be saw-milling, timber being brought down from the hills and shipped by sea. But a more interesting enterprise was that of the London Missionary Society, which had made the extreme south of India one of its principal fields of work. The ancient "matriarchal" institutions which once obtained in Egypt and Mesopotamia still survive, as will be explained more fully below, among the Nairs, with the result that the women are very independent and self-respecting. They are also, perhaps in consequence of the abundance of water, extremely clean in their clothing and persons. The Mission was endeavouring to enable them to turn these gifts to commercial use, by teaching Nair girls the methods of hand lace-making practised in England, and acting as agents for the sale. This had been so far successful that an Indian business man had set up a rival concern, purely for commercial objects.

The next time I passed that way I visited another lace-making centre, at Muligamudu, which means "pepper town," between Nagercoil and Trivandrum. The original settlement there was an octagonal tower, from the roof of which I looked across the waving fronds of the crowns of coconut palms to the jagged outline of the Ghats. The floor immediately below had been the residence of a Belgian, who had retired from business to enter the monastic life, and who had devoted his property to the building of this peculiar monastery. The floor below his was divided into eight wedge-shaped cubicles, each with a window piercing one of the eight walls, radiating from the centre; below that there were various common rooms, one floor being the chapel. But the founder of the monastery had died, the monks had gone, the tower left unoccupied, except that the ground floor was used as a storehouse for wood and tools, and the first floor as a carpenter's shop, and the property, which included a considerable area of land, had passed into the possession of a Belgian order of nuns, who formed quite a delightful community. They had very good buildings in the form of a group of bungalows, of which one was the lace-making school. They imported patterns from Brussels, and

one of the nuns was herself a clever designer. Their work was always much admired when exhibited in Madras, but was not sold outside India. I told the Lady Superior (if that is the correct title) that probably she could find a much more profitable market if she sent it to London, but she did not welcome the suggestion.

CHAPTER XVII

COCHIN AND TRICHUR

A Coconut Plantation

There are three routes by which the journey from Trivandrum to Madras can be travelled. The most interesting and the longest in time, though not in mileage, is through the State of Cochin, by water to Ernakulam, and thence by rail by the narrow-gauge Cochin State Railway to the junction at Shoranur with the broad-gauge line from Madras to the coast towns of the Malabar District of Madras Presidency, which runs eastward through the Palghat Gap.

I chose this route once, partly in order to accept an invitation received in Kodaikanal from Mrs. and Miss Baker to visit Mr. Baker's coconut plantation on the way. He was, as I was told, the biggest European planter in India, if not in the world, a fact which he himself accounted for by saying "Rubber planting is for the European, Coconut for the Indian." Mr. Baker having confirmed his mother's invitation, I fixed up an appointment to meet him on a certain evening at the travellers' bungalow at Kottayam, whence he would bring me along to his plantation, which was on a backwater, and about equally distant from Kottayam and Alleppey.

I started from Trivandrum early in the morning for Quilon, the motor-bus for once doing the trip without any unintended halts, and was in good time on the quay from which the little steam launch for Kottayam started, and had to hang about for about a couple of hours. Then we started on a sleepy, languorous journey, through the placid waters of a succession of backwaters and connecting canals, under the waving fronds of coconut palms. Along that coast the detritus brought down by the streams descending the short steep slopes of the Western Ghats is thrown back by the sea, and forms an almost continuous sandy ridge along the shore, behind which the little rivers broaden out, finding only sparse channels by which they can break through and discharge their waters. The widest and deepest of these channels in the two States of Travancore and Cochin is at the port of Cochin itself.

The canals that connect the backwaters have no need of locks, and the only boats we met were "wallams," craft of an ancient traditional type built on fine lines similar to those of a Canadian canoe, but ranging upwards to the size and carrying capacity of a Thames barge, very solidly and durably constructed of hard wood. Some still in use, I was told, were over a hundred years old.

My route followed the line of the coast as far as Alleppey, and then turned up a river channel to Kottayam, which was the terminus for the steam launch. But when we got to Alleppey I was informed by the captain that he did not propose to go any further, since so much time had been lost at starting, and, any way, I and my boy were the only passengers booked for Kottayam. We must get out and find lodgings for the night, and then perhaps the launch would be punctual next day and take me on. As I had assured Baker that I would be at the Kottayam bungalow that night without fail I insisted on being taken on, and finally got my way, on condition of paying the overtime wages of the crew, since they were only bound to work up to nightfall for their regular wages. First they must have time for an evening meal. So for an hour or two I strolled about the town of Alleppey, which seemed to consist chiefly of a long canal wharf flanked by shopkeepers' open stalls selling mostly fruit and other foodstuffs, full of shoppers and loiterers, and lit inadequately by the little native oil-lamps which enable the bazaar men to do their business. Finally I and my boy and my luggage were deposited on the landing-place at Kottayam, and the launch went back to Alleppey.

The travellers' bungalow was close by, and we felt, rather than saw, our way up the path to it. There we found one traveller, a stranger to me, who seemed much annoyed at my disturbing his solitude. Very ungraciously he informed me that Mr. Baker had been there all day, but had gone an hour or two before my arrival. The launch not having come before a certain time, he had concluded there was no chance of its coming that night, and that I would stop the night at Alleppey and come on to him next morning, which in fact I might very well have done. Having told me so much, the other occupant of the bungalow retired into his shell, without giving me Baker's messages as to what I should do in case I did turn up, contrary to his expectation.

Next morning I sent my boy out to explore. He learnt that

Mr. Baker's visit to Kottayam was to see a cousin who supervised a missionary school a little way off beside another waterway. I called on her, and she kindly lent me the use of her own wallam and the services of the man who navigated it. We embarked. I was given the seat of honour in the middle of the canoe, underneath a sheltering roof, while my boy sat in front with the luggage, and Miss Baker's man behind pointed where the water was shallow, and paddled where in crossing a lake we got into water too deep for his bamboo pole to reach the bottom. I may here remark that punting and paddling were the only two out of the ordinary simple manual activities that I saw done in India precisely as they are done in England.

Thus I had another lazy day moving gently on the surface of placid waters, between coconut groves and paddy fields, seeing scarcely anyone except occasionally one or two women, bare to the waist, and clothed below in spotlessly white garments, coming down to the water to bathe or wash clothes. But when we had done about half the journey the boatman said something which was evidently pleasing to my boy, in Malayalim, near enough to Tamil for him to understand, he shook his head by way of affirmation in reply, the wallam was tied to the bank, and the two went off, asking me to wait a few minutes for them. I watched them out of sight, then followed quietly in the same direction. I found a little path formed by the tread of bare feet which brought me to a grassy spot under trees, concealed by bushes, where some seven or eight men, including my two, were squatting on the ground and being served with drink. It was obviously a little illicit open-air toddy shop. I returned to the wallam as quietly as I had gone, without being seen or heard, and some ten minutes afterwards my travelling companions returned, smelling unmistakably of toddy, cheerful but not intoxicated.

A year or two afterwards I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. "Pussyfoot" Johnson in Madras, where he was campaigning for prohibition in India. He was a weird figure at that moment, dressed in clothes much too warm, and so compelled to take off coat, waistcoat, collar and tie, and to lecture in his shirt, trousers and "suspenders," and his accent was as remarkable as his attire. He lectured with enthusiasm to a sympathetic audience, told us what a magnificent success prohibition was in America, how

crime had practically disappeared, the prisons were almost empty, and were rapidly being altered to fit them for more pleasing uses, and how those who had conscientiously opposed the measure had been converted into enthusiastic supporters. But one thing he did not tell us, and that was how prohibition could possibly be enforced in a land where any man can set up his own home brewery in his back garden with practically no trouble or expense. In India the difficulty is not to manufacture alcoholic drinks, but to prevent any sweet liquid from fermenting. The juice of the palm is collected for two purposes, to make toddy and to make sugar. If for toddy, it only has to be kept till next day, when it will be about 7 or 8 per cent alcohol. The day after it will turn sour, and then begin to stink. If it is sugar that is wanted, lime must be put in the earthenware pots (chatties) in which it is collected, and the juice must be boiled immediately.

It was late in the afternoon when I reached Mr. Baker's house and estate, and learnt something of its history. His father and grandfather had both been Cochin residents before him, one or both in missionary service, and by way of reward for special services had been given an islet and a considerable area of the surrounding swamp. On the islet they had built the house, and they had "gridironed" the swamp, converting it into a series of long narrow oblongs of alternate land and water, digging out the silt where there was to be water, and spreading it on the oblongs which were to be land, and planting coconuts along the margins. The gridironing had to be planned so that the water should not be stagnant, and a current should always be moving through each stretch of water.*

The saleable produce of the plantation was copra and coir. Copra is the dried kernel of the ripe nut, coir the fibre which covers the hard shell in a thick wrapping. The work of planting and tree-climbing was done by men, the other work of the estate by women. This consisted in cutting the nuts in two, exposing the kernels to dry in the sun, pulling out the fibre and spinning it into yarn, which was sold to be made into coconut matting. These operations were carried on by the simplest possible methods.

* I think this also prevented the breeding of mosquitoes, which takes place in stagnant water. At any rate I cannot remember being troubled by them during my stay.

A woman squatting beside a heap of nuts freed from their outer wrappings picked them up one at a time, held each in her left hand, and with one blow of the chopper in her right cut shell and kernel in two, with such precision that as long as I watched her she never failed to divide it equally with one blow, and never hit so hard as to let the blade touch her left hand. The half-shells were used as cups and measures in the retailing of paddy. The spinning of the coir into yarn was done by deft fingers only, with no apparatus, and remarkably quickly. There was no difficulty in finding workers so skilled in a population which had made the exploitation of the coconut palm one of its primary resources from time immemorial, but for that very reason the profits to the planter were small, and Mr. Baker told me that the land he had under paddy paid better. His relations with his workers were patriarchal; the fact that they were extremely prolific worried him. As a rule Indian women prolong the periods between the births of their children by prolonged suckling, but whether those on his estate were exceptionally well nourished, or for some other cause, in some cases this did not prevent a woman from bearing children annually. He tried to discourage early marriages by giving extra dowries to girls who postponed marriage till after reaching the age of eighteen, but found that postponement of marriage did not always secure postponement of maternity.

After a few days spent very pleasantly with the Bakers, I was taken on to the nearest halt on the water-way from Alleppey to Cochin.

Cochin Town and State

The town of Cochin is a "British Possession," reckoned as an outlying portion of the Malabar District of Madras Presidency; its hinterland is a Native State, enlightened and progressive in its administration but most conservative in its institutions, presenting in its little area an illustrative epitome of the whole history of civilization. My visit was to Cochin Town first, and then to Trichur, the capital, or, more correctly, one of the capitals, of the State.

Cochin town occupies the end of the sandy palm-growing bar described above which separates the backwaters from the sea, so that it has the sea on one side and the river and harbour on the

other. Fish are abundant in both sea and river, they come in and out in shoals with the rise and fall of the tide, which is slight, and along the bank there are curious wooden structures by means of which large nets are lowered beneath the surface of the water, to be drawn quickly when a shoal is passing. My stay in the town, which had a population of about twenty thousand, packed rather closely, was for a few hours only; I had no talk with any of its business men, but used the time in paying a visit to the Synagogue of the White Jews.

This little community, which is not prosperous, and which seemed to be dwindling in numbers, presents an intriguing but apparently insoluble historical puzzle. How and when did they come there? They are not merely white in the sense that Europeans generally are called white, they are blond, and so markedly different from the generality of black-haired and brown-eyed Jews that their co-religionists in Cochin, from whom they keep aloof, are called "Black Jews." I do not know whether any expert anthropologist has investigated their racial affinities, but they seemed to me to be unmistakable Nordics. How did they get there? Their own answer to that question is that they were settled in Cochin by Solomon, to carry on work in connection with the Temple; alternative guesses have been made, none of which is either antecedently probable or supported by a scrap of evidence. They treasure their copies of the Law and certain priestly vestments as their most precious possessions, and are said to be strict in their religious observances. Can it be that after all their tradition is to be accepted, and that Solomon, when he made the Mosaic religion into the handmaid of an autocratic state, selected from among the very mixed populations of Palestine members of some Nordic tribe for overseas service, perhaps because they were suspected of taking a lead in the opposition which led in the next reign to the revolt of the "Ten Tribes"? It is unlikely that the question will ever be answered.

All the Cochin communications are by water, either by sea, or river, canal and backwater. Hence Ernakulam, distant $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles across the lagoon, the terminus of the Cochin State Railway, is developing into a supplementary port, transmitting goods and passengers to and from the seaport. Already in my time various schemes for improving the harbour and its communications were

being discussed between the three Governments concerned, Travancore, Cochin and Madras, all dependent for their execution on success in the difficult task of getting the attention of the remote authorities in Delhi and Simla, and the still more remote autocrats in the India Office. Something was actually done in 1923.

An Ayurvedic Physician

I found Trichur charming and intensely interesting; and my visit was under fortunate conditions marred only by certain rheumatic pains which I attributed to incipient gout, but which turned out afterwards to be symptoms of latent dysentery. Even these pains had their compensation, for they brought me a call from a friendly Ayurvedic physician, who gave me a bottle of ointment to be rubbed into the leg affected, composed of essences extracted from various plants at the right hour and phase of the moon, and with the correct *mantrams*. He further instructed me in the exercises which keep rheumatism at bay. I was to stand erect facing the sun, then kneel, stretch myself on the ground and touch it with my forehead, then rise to my feet again, breathing deeply in time with the body movements. Invocation of the Deity would add to the efficacy of the prostrations, but my adviser left the choice of a suitable invocation to me. He refused to accept any fee. Naturally neither ointment nor prostrations affected the rheumatism, which remained till the dysentery was cured by injections of emetine, but I can recommend the prostrations as less boring and uninteresting than ordinary physical jerks. The textbooks of the Ayurvedic medical science in use in Cochin are unwritten; they are in the form of verses committed to memory. "Even in a petty village," says Mr. Subbarama Aiyar, "there will be a specialist for diseases of children, an eye specialist, an ordinary vaidyan who cures all common diseases, and a *mantravatu* who pretends to cure diseases by chanting certain hymns within himself. . . . There is also a *vishavaidyan*, or expert in curing snake-bite, in some villages."*

I had been lectured once before on the merits of Ayurvedic medicine by my clerk, who told me that it was far superior to European medicine as it was based on principles by which the

* *Some South Indian Villages*, p. 139.

layman could see how to treat himself. Thus when he felt an attack of malaria coming on with chills, he did not take quinine, but pepper, since a cold disease should be treated with a hot medicine; and he always found the pepper treatment effective. A letter appeared in the *Madras Mail* about the same time pointing out a much more striking Ayurvedic superiority—European medicine can, it is admitted even by its advocates, do nothing for a man after he is dead; the Ayurvedic practitioner, if fully instructed, can bring him to life again. He only refrains because the procedure is elaborate, requiring the correct recital of many *mantrams* accompanied by the correct performance of the associated ceremonies, and if the vaidyan makes the slightest slip in word or motion, not only does he fail to bring the dead to life, he dies himself.

I never heard of a case in which the raising of the dead was attempted, either successfully or unsuccessfully, but I did hear of one in which the vaidyan's reliance on his mantrams had a fatal result for his patient, and an unfortunate one for himself. I was at a tennis party and was sitting out with my host, Dr. Chandler, who was then engaged in compiling the official Tamil lexicon, when another guest, a police court magistrate, arrived and asked to consult Chandler about a murder case then before his court. A woman had been taken ill in the street, a little crowd had quickly collected including one man who said he was a physician and who directed the people to bring the woman to his surgery, which was close by. They did so, and he gave her some medicine, and she died in agony. The onlookers accused the vaidyan of murder, called in the police, and an inquest was held. It was found that the cause of death was a large dose of corrosive sublimate. The physician when put in the dock pleaded that he could not have been responsible as he possessed no medicines which were not perfectly harmless. The case was adjourned in order that this statement could be tested. It was found that most of the stock in his surgery consisted of irritant poisons, including corrosive sublimate. When brought up for trial a second time that morning, on being confronted with that evidence, he had admitted its truth, but declared that in every case he had killed the poison with *muppu*. The magistrate had never heard of *muppu* before and no one in court could tell him what it was. So he adjourned the case

again, and referred the question to Chandler, who could not answer on the spot, but said he would ask his assistant pundits in the morning.

When next I saw Chandler he told me the result of the enquiry. *Muppu* was short for *munru uppu*, three salts, and consisted of three salts distilled from certain plants with certain ceremonies and mantrams, which made up a medicine of marvellous virtue. A few drops added to any poisonous drug made it innocuous, while leaving unaffected any beneficial quality the drug might possess; but if *muppu* were taken undiluted the inside of the man who drank it would turn to gold and he would never die. In all sincerity these learned men assured Dr. Chandler that the unfortunate vaidyan concerned could not have got hold of the right *muppu*, there must have been some hitch in its preparation, perhaps a wrongly pronounced word or word omitted in one of the mantrams. "If he had got the right *muppu*," they said, "the woman could not possibly have been harmed."

In my last year in Madras I had further contacts with exponents of indigenous schools of medicine, which will be recorded in due course.

The State of Cochin forms the central portion of the territory over which the Malayali language* and culture predominate, which comprises also the State of Travancore on the south and British Malabar on the north. All this region is thickly populated, although much of the surface is mountain and jungle, and the people gain their livelihood by the exploitation of the surface of the land and the harvests of the sea, or by simple handicrafts and the small scale trading that goes with such industry. Over the whole area of its 14,835 square miles, a population exceeding eight millions was enumerated in 1921, 545 per square mile; Cochin had the densest population of the three, its 1,418 square miles supporting a population of 979,000, 690 to the square mile, a density exceeding that of England and Wales, which in the same year was 670 per square mile. Further, this little State has the highest percentage of literacy of any separate part of India, and also the largest proportion of Christians, these forming about one-third of the population.

* The Malayali language is closely allied to Tamil, but it has a different script, and more Sanskrit words in its vocabulary.

Cochin is the stronghold of that ancient Indian Church which was founded, according to tradition, by St. Thomas the Doubter, and which must have been nearly as ancient in its origin as his time, since it was represented in a general synod of Christian Churches about A.D. 200. Its adherents are commonly known as Syrian Christians, and they acknowledge the authority of a supreme head in Syria or Mesopotamia, and thus maintain a slight connection with other fragments of the ancient Asiatic Church which was shattered by the onrush of Mahomedanism. It is probable that at one time the Syrian Christians were even stronger in Malabar District than in Cochin, but there the majority were converted to Roman Catholicism by the Jesuits during the century of Portuguese ascendancy, and both communities lost more than half their membership during the invasions and devastations carried out by Tippu Sahib, "the Tiger of Mysore," who slaughtered those who refused to be converted to Mahomedanism. It is claimed for the Syrian Christians that their ancestors, who were converted by St. Thomas and his followers, had previously been high-caste Hindus, whereas the majority of the converts from Hinduism won by Protestant and Catholic missionaries belong to the depressed castes, and have much to gain and nothing to lose by being converted. Nevertheless the Malayali Brahmins regard contact with any sort of Christian as equally polluting.

The Diwan of Cochin

The ruling dynasty, like that of Travancore, claims Kshattriya status and descent from the Chera Rajahs, and also follows the Nair rule of succession. The State safeguarded its independence in the sixteenth century by alliance with the Portuguese against the Zamorin (Sea King) of Calicut and by ceding the town of Cochin to them, and subsequently by continuing the same relations with the Dutch and English East India Companies. Its government up to 1808 was like that of Japan, in that the Rajah's authority was delegated to a hereditary prime minister called the Paliath Atchan, but in that year the minister attempted to wage war against the Company without asking the Rajah for his consent, with the result that he was deposed from office. The title, and with it a great landed property, continues to be inherited by his descendants in the male line, according to the rule of primogeniture,

but the administration of the State is in the hands of the Diwan, who is appointed by the Rajah for a term of years.

At the time of my visit the Diwan, who had his residence in Trichur, though the Rajah and his household lived alternately in his other capitals, was Mr. J. W. (Sir Joseph) Bhore, a Bengali and a Christian of the second generation. He, like his father, was greatly interested in the work of Christian missions, and thus met his wife, an English lady engaged in mission work. They had three charming children, and it was evident that the marriage was a very happy and successful one. My recollection is of a very pleasant house, friendly and informal hospitality, a tea party in a beautiful garden, at which the talk turned on hunting in the jungle, and on the marvellous recuperative powers of men of the jungle tribes when mauled by leopards or injured by accidents which would be fatal to other men. One remark struck me. A man in the party described a day's march in the hills, at the conclusion of which he calculated he had walked forty miles, and felt proud at having performed such a feat, until he remembered that a coolie had gone all the way with him, carrying the tiffin basket on his head.

I had a good deal of talk with Mr. Bhore, in which he told me of various plans which he was trying to work out for developing the resources of the State. Some of these were concerned with the question of port improvement. It seemed certain that sooner or later something would be done to improve the Cochin harbour, and the access to it from the sea; but after that there would arise the problem of Ernakulam, which also would require improvement in its water communications if the State was to get much benefit from its participation in the harbour works. Then there was the problem of the Cochin State Railway. It had been planned as part of the South Indian line from Madras to the West Coast in collaboration with the Railway Department of the Government of India. The Cochin State authorities had been informed that the line would be built by a certain date and that it would be metre gauge. The Cochin State built its line accordingly, but it had to wait for its connection, and when the S.I.R. line did come to Shoranur it was broad gauge, so that all goods going either way had to be unloaded out of one set of trucks and loaded on to another. Could anything be done? Could the metre gauge be

converted to broad gauge? It was not so much the cost of the conversion that prohibited this as the fact that during the process the State would be deprived of its most important means of communication with the rest of the world. A third rail had been suggested, so that during the period of transition the line would carry either broad or narrow rolling stock.

When Mr. Bhore asked my opinion on this point I said that the idea seemed worth consideration, seeing that the Great Western Railway Company had used the same device in converting its line from broad to narrow gauge, and had had trains of both types running on three lines of rails for a good many years in the West of England. The difference between the English narrow gauge of 4 ft. 8½ in. and the G.W.R. broad gauge of 7 ft. 0 in., viz. 2 ft. 3½ in., was practically identical with that of 2 ft. 2½ in. between metre gauge (3 ft. 3⅓ in.) and the Indian broad gauge of 5 ft. 6 in. He asked me to try to get further information, so I wrote to the Secretary of the Company, and got copies of documents and blue prints giving detailed information with regard to the work done when the third-rail plan was adopted. I forwarded these to the Diwan, but heard no more on the matter. Obviously to put a third rail on the outside of two existing ones to convert a narrow gauge into a broad one presents other and more difficult engineering problems than to put it for the opposite purpose between two existing lines of rail, where the same sleepers will serve, and no extra space is wanted between up and down lines where the track is doubled. I presume these problems were found insoluble.

Other schemes were connected with a 52-mile tram line that went up into the hills to assist the conveyance of timber. Teak was the one wood for which there was a ready and certain market, though Indian teak, owing it is said to inferior methods of seasoning, is not equal to Burmese, being harder to work and more liable to warp. Mr. Bhore found that felling had been carried on recklessly. The teak trees grew fairly abundantly in some spots, only sparsely in others, but always in the midst of other forest growth, which immediately spread and occupied the spots where the teak was felled, preventing the growth of young teak trees to take the place of those that went. The forest was deteriorating and the tramway ceasing to be profitable, but to initiate a conserv-

ative system of exploitation, and to extend and consolidate the area under teak by planting and restraining competing growth, would turn the no profit of the tramway into an annual loss. Mr. Bhore accordingly had been exploring the country on both sides, and had discovered a fine waterfall not far off, which seemed to offer the possibility of installing a hydro-electric generating station, to supply power for working the tramway with a considerable surplus of energy for other industrial purposes. Of this scheme also I never got any later news.

Anthropological Studies, Nambudiris and Nairs

On the evening when I arrived at Trichur and took up my quarters at the travellers' bungalow, I found Mr. L. K. Anandakrishna Iyer there, in great excitement, not on account of my arrival, but because he was expecting Mr. F. C. Richards of the I.C.S. from Madras. I had already met Anandakrishna Iyer in Madras, when he gave a short course of lectures in the Presidency College on the social institutions of the Malayali country. He was the author of a standard work on *Cochin Castes and Tribes*, and the State Anthropologist of Cochin, an appointment which he believed was unique, also the Keeper of the Trichur Zoo, and he held in addition other Government appointments; in fact, as he told me, he held more offices and received a smaller salary than any other chief officer in all India. A few years later he gave up all these appointments on accepting that of Professor of Sociology in the University of Bombay, in succession to Sir Patrick Geddes.

Richards, on his side, was greatly interested in the study of South Indian pre-history, and had been for a considerable time in close touch with Anandakrishna Iyer. He had recently lectured in the Madras Senate House, Lord Pentland taking the chair, on "Dravidian Origins," arguing that Dravidian culture was akin to those of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and that the true Dravidian race, as distinct from the pre-Dravidian tribes which were then almost universally confounded with it, was a branch of what Sergi had called the Mediterranean Race. These ideas, now admitted to be substantially correct, were then altogether heretical. In the course of one memorable drive Anandakrishna Iyer contrived to display to us visible illustrations of the main features of the social structure of his State, about which I had already gathered

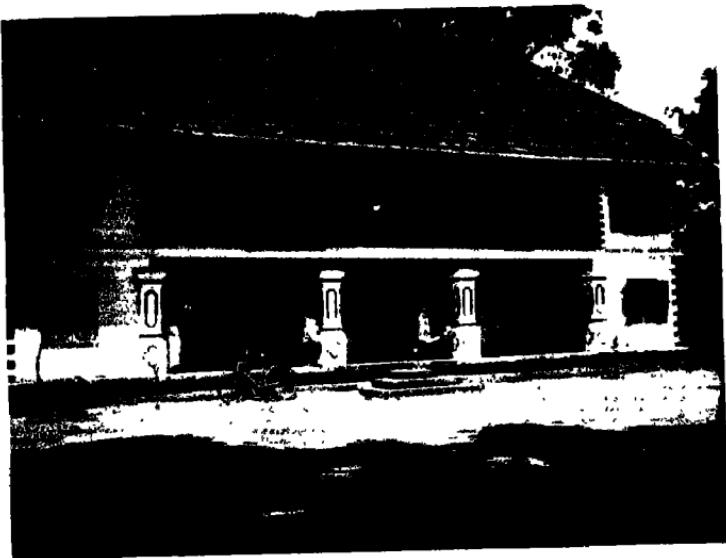
a good deal of information from four surveys of villages in Cochin and British Malabar sent in by students of the Madras Colleges.

Apart from the Indian Christians, who in Cochin live largely in separate villages of their own, and the members of the various occupational castes of artisans, such as carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, workers in brass and copper, potters, washermen and the like, the population mainly consists of three castes, Nairs, Tiyyas and Cherumas or Pulayas. But all these are subordinate to the priestly aristocracy of Nambudiri Brahmins, who also, being the chief landowners, are much in the position of English Lords of the Manor in Tudor times. As such they are termed Jenmis. Their estates are large and tend to grow, for they prevent subdivision by the drastic process of allowing only the eldest son of each Nambudiri to marry, though he is allowed a plurality of wives. They divide nearly all their land into tenant farms, which are ordinarily let out to Nairs or Tiyyas on twelve-year leases, known as *Kanoms*, the leaseholders being termed *kanomdars*,* retaining relatively small portions as home farms, which are cultivated for them by Cherumas under the supervision of the younger men in the household. Their houses form three sides of quadrangles around an open courtyard, the fourth side being occupied with sheds and outhouses. One side belongs to the women, who live in strict seclusion.

A visit to a manor-house of this description was included in our itinerary on the day in question. The head of the family received us on a balcony looking over the quadrangle on the southern wing, the western central portion of the house being, as I understood, the women's quarters. There was practically no conversation, the visit being taken as one of ceremony, but the Nambudiri offered us the usual refreshment of the milk of tender coconuts, which he put on the ground in front of us, in order that he might not be contaminated by contact with us.

The Nambudiris appear to be an intrusive element in the population, but when they came, and how they acquired their ascendancy are unexplored questions. It seems pretty certain that the Nairs were the native aristocracy, and that the royal

* Under these leases the kanomdar pays, in addition to the annual rent, a premium called the *kanom* amount, on taking up the lease, which can be cancelled before expiry by the Jenmi on repaying the *kanom* amount.



GUEST CHAMBER OF NAMBUDIRI HOUSE



A GROUP OF NAYADIS

families of all the Malayali area, the Zamorins of Calicut, the Maharajahs of Travancore and the Rajahs of Cochin, are Nairs by descent. The Nambudiris themselves say that the whole stretch of land between the Ghats and the sea from Bombay to Cape Comorin (the ancient Kerada Kingdom) was created by a demigod named Parasurama, who after slaughtering Rama's Kshatriya followers in twenty-one victorious battles, was finally defeated by Rama in single combat and forced to yield his possessions to him. He then obtained a new realm for himself by ordering the sea to recede, and partitioned the new land between sixty-four Nambudiris to be held by them and their descendants in perpetuity.

It is more pertinent to enquire how Nambudiri ascendancy, however acquired, has been maintained, and in what way it is exercised. I gathered that they relied in the main on their reputation for sanctity, and for their knowledge of the Vedas and other Sanscrit literature. One young Nambudiri with whom I became well acquainted told me how he was educated. For seven years he had to spend twelve hours a day learning Sanscrit verses by ear; he had to repeat them after his tutor and get the right pronunciation, and the right rise and fall of note, till he was perfect, but he was never taught to read or write the verses, or given even the glimmer of an idea as to what they meant. He had also to spend an hour a day prostrating himself and rising to his feet in the manner shown me by my Ayurvedic physician, and to this exercise he attributed the fact that he had come through his seven years' schooling without a breakdown. Mere learning, thus acquired, however highly esteemed by unlearned neighbours, would hardly have sufficed to maintain Nambudiri authority if it had been applied to no use recognized as beneficial. There is such a use. Mr. Anandakrishna Iyer informed me that every Nair household has a cobra shrine, to which a Nambudiri comes regularly to do pujah to the cobras, thereby safeguarding the Nairs from snakebite.

For the purpose of making profit out of their ascendancy the Nambudiris exploit the difference between their social institutions and those of the Nairs, among whom ancient "matriarchal" institutions still survive. Nairs live in large family communities known as *tarvads*, of which the eldest woman is the constitutional queen, while the administration of the tarvad affairs and the management of the property is entrusted to one of the male mem-

bers, usually the eldest man, though if exceptionally incompetent he may be deposed. Property descends from mother to daughter; all children born to the women are entitled to maintenance by the tarvad for life, but not the children of the men, whose children have to be maintained by the tarvads to which their mothers belong. Nair girls, before puberty, are ceremonially married to husbands whom they may never see again, and with whom they never have any matrimonial relations. The ordinary procedure, I was told, was for the mother to look out for a passer-by, invite him into the house, ask him to put the *tali*, the gold necklace which serves the purpose of the wedding ring with us, on the girl's neck, give him the customary fee of a rupee, and bid him farewell. Thereafter the girl will when and as she chooses enter into matrimonial relationship, termed *sambandham*, with men of the Nambudiri and Nair castes. She may change her sambandham partner as often as she likes, but may only have one at a time. He visits her, by her invitation, in her own home; when she tires of him, she simply tells him that her invitations will cease. The only other restriction is that her mate must not be of a lower caste than she is; and the Nambudiris have impressed upon the Nair girls the idea that it is a great honour to have a Nambudiri paramour. Thus the younger sons of Nambudiri families, debarred from marriage and from intercourse with the women of their own caste, find mistresses among the Nair women, who are considered the most beautiful of South Indians,* without incurring any responsibility for their children by them.

What exactly Nair men think and feel about this relationship between the two castes I cannot say. I have never heard a Nair say a word on the subject, and it was too delicate a topic for me to touch upon. But perhaps it is significant that it was a Nair who created the non-Brahmin party. I was informed that among the Nairs there was a movement for the reform of their marriage customs.

It is to be added that the tarvads tend to disintegrate under modern conditions. Naturally there is a tendency for the members of the tarvad to multiply beyond its capacity to maintain them. In some cases this leads to quarrels with the acting head, and a split. As the tarvad sinks into poverty the young men have to

* Of the Tamil women the saying is current among Europeans that God made them in response to the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation."

look for work outside, in the majority of instances they take on any miserably paid work they can find within reach of their own home, but many of the more enterprising go farther afield, and I have been told that the Madras police are largely recruited from them, and that the cooks and coffee-house keepers in the city of Madras are mostly Nairs. Those who can afford it are eager to avail themselves of the chances of rising in the world offered to university graduates, of which the career of Sir Sankaran Nair is a striking advertisement. When such an emigrant from the West Coast is able to support a family, his *sambandham* usually becomes a permanent monogamic marriage.

I never visited the District of Malabar, but as it differs very little from Cochin in its social institutions I give here an account of one Nambudiri family of the Walluvanad Taluk, for which I am indebted to Mr. Sundara Aiyar, whose father, a Tamil Brahmin, was employed by the family as a Sanscrit pundit. Nambudiris generally, he says, are noted for their simple lives, their Vedic learning, and their intense conservatism. This particular family, to which the young Nambudiri I have mentioned above belongs, was a contrast in the last respect, its head being enlightened, philanthropic and progressive. It owned a tile factory at Shoranur and a large share in a spinning-mill at Calicut, and maintained a village school employing five "qualified" teachers at salaries ranging from Rs.7 to Rs.15 per month(!), which taught reading, writing, arithmetic, music, drawing and gardening to 126 boys and 42 girls. The schoolrooms were well built, well ventilated and well equipped in the matter of furniture, maps and pictures, and had a small flower garden. The family owned also nearly all the land in the adjoining village of 2,480 inhabitants (census of 1911), drawing therefrom an annual income of 10,000 paras (200,000 lb.) of paddy, which was husked in the village and used to feed a vast household of Nambudiri priests and students, and maintain a "choultry," i.e. a shelter and place of refreshment for travellers.

The women of the family seldom went out except to visit the temple, and when they did leave the house they hid their faces behind big umbrellas made of strips of bamboo and palm leaves.*

* These umbrellas have only very short handles and do not fold up. An umbrella-maker carrying a number to market is a very queer object.

They had, however, one exceptional diversion. The Sanskrit pundit in his leisure time recited Puranic stories, to which the young Nambudiris listened eagerly, and for this purpose took up his position in the courtyard, beside the women's quarters, and took care to speak loudly and clearly enough for them to hear.

Against Mr. Sundara Iyer's account of this one Nambudiri family, a very exceptional one except in the seclusion of its women, may be put the following statement of Mr. A. Krishna Wariyar. The Wariyars are a section of the Ambalavasis ("dwellers in temples"), who are reckoned intermediate in status between Nairs and Nambudiris, and are probably a survival of the priestly caste of the time before the coming of the latter. They have the same custom of inheritance as the Nairs.

The kanomdars are at the mercy of their jenmis. . . . The jenmis are oppressive in many ways. All sorts of excuses are eagerly clutched at for extorting money from the tenantry. Besides the very high rate demanded at the time of a renewal of tenure (usually these tenancies are held for twelve years) there are exactions on the occasion of a death, marriage, or other religious festival in the jenmi's household, and fines often in amounts more than Rs.100 are levied right and left for silly reasons. Various instances have come within the personal knowledge of the writer. One family had to return some lands two years ago to the jenmi because when the term expired and application was made for renewal, the fee demanded was so high that twelve years' profit from the land could hardly equal the amount. One man was fined Rs.100 because he refused to pay two annas as a subscription to a religious festival that the jenmi was then conducting. In another case the jenmi was contemplating a pilgrimage and all tenants were asked to give Rs.10 each for it within twenty-four hours.

Up till 1916 no man [in the Kothachira desam] other than the two jenmis was allowed to tile his house, to build an upstair building or a gateway; even now it is rash for a ryot to ask for such permission. No woman is allowed to appear before the jenmi with covered breast, no man should approach him with more than a single cloth around his waist, which should not fall below his knees. . . .

There are two other dangers to which the landholder [kanomdar] is constantly exposed. . . . *Melcharth*, and the recent policy of the jenmi to convert kanom holdings into *verumpattam* [annual tenancy at will]. *Melcharth* is the jenmi's right to make over by promise at his will to a higher bidder any portion of land which is being enjoyed by a kanomdar under him. This is constantly being exercised by the jenmi and it has a very bad effect both economically and morally on the agricultural popula-

tion. [The tendency to convert *kanom* tenure into *verumpattam* is due to fear of legislation for Malabar, following Travancore and Cochin precedents, to protect the interests of kanomdars.]

The economic condition of this desam is rather discouraging. The people are deep in debt, are overworked and underfed and ground down by a double tyranny, the tyranny of the landlord who is also the moneylender, and the tyranny of deep-rooted custom in all their lives and walks. . . . It looks as though the capitalist knows no way to employ his capital except lending to neighbours. . . . The rents are very high. . . . The population has grown but not the means of subsistence. . . . Year by year the rich become richer and the poor poorer. The process is continuing at a fast rate.

With regard to local history Mr. Krishna Wariyar says:

Centuries ago, as far back as 1,800 years, this desam [Kothachira] must have formed part of the famous division of Kutnad. The name of the once historic land of Kutnad, which at one time covered the whole of Mid-Kerala, is now confined to a little desam which lies contiguous to Kothachira. The ruins still traceable on the plains below the Kutnad hill of temples and a fortress, and the large number of ruined walls seen in the vicinity, suggest the existence of a flourishing city on this spot in the past.

But about Kothachira in the more recent past. The country must at one time have been governed by local chieftains from whose hands the Brahmin jenmis who now hold the lands got them with the advent of the age of Brahmin dominance. There are families which still hold the name of *Naduvashis*, i.e. "governors of the country," who are now labourers and landless ryots. They still cling with faith and reverence to their old traditions and ceremonial forms which they practised when they were masters of the country.*

Syrian Christians, Nayadis, Tiyyas, Cherumas, Moplas

On our way to the Nambudiri manor-house Mr. Anandakrishna Iyer took us through several Christian villages, and pointed out to us that we could perceive when we were coming to them by the odour, due to the fact that they do not, like Hindus, abstain from meat, nor like the Mahomedans, abhor the pig. On the contrary, at least in some villages, a roasted sucking-pig is the favourite central dish at their wedding feasts. I did not find the smell strong enough to be offensive. We visited two of the churches, which dominated their villages like English village churches; lofty and roomy places of assembly, rectangular, but

* *Some South Indian Villages*, p. 179.

with rooms built against one wall for the priest's residence. We interviewed one priest, an elderly, benevolent-looking man, but as he had no English we had to get information with regard to tenets, ceremonies and relationships between priests and people from Mr. Anandakrishna Iyer, an outsider not much interested in the subject. In all these respects the Syrian Christians appeared to resemble English Nonconformists rather than Roman Catholics and Anglicans, but still more the Christians of the first century, which is what one would expect from Indian conservatism. One feature of their ceremonial is the processional march round the church, the priest leading, the congregation following. This has to be "widdershins," the opposite way to the hands of a clock, which among Hindus is reckoned unlucky. They also, as I was told by an English missionary lady, still follow the apostolic fashion of greeting one another "with a holy kiss." The kiss is with the hands, it must be given and received. The giver holds his hands, palm to palm, in front of him, the receiver holds them between his, stroking the backs with his palms and drawing his hands back.

The Syrian Christians, like the Nairs, have the custom of inheritance in the female line, but they are more individualistic and enterprising, and rely more on trading as a means of living.

After our interview with the Nambudiri Jenmi we plunged to the opposite end of the social scale by an interview with a party of Nayadis, the most untouchable of all untouchables, who have to keep to a distance of at least a hundred yards from a caste Hindu. They are sometimes employed as watchmen over outlying patches of cultivation, to keep away animals from the forests by night; they beg from passers-by on the high-roads, crying out to them from a distance, in the hope that small coins or grains of paddy may be dropped for them on the roadway, which they may only approach when the donors are the prescribed distance away. They seemed even more meagre and starved than the jungle-dwellers I saw in Travancore, from whom they differed in being much less adorned with necklaces, and otherwise even more scantily clothed. This lack of evidence of the desire for self-decoration seemed a sign of extreme malnutrition.

On our return journey to Trichur we stopped at two places, the first time to see a recently excavated kist-vaen, and a large group of dolmens as similar to those of Cornwall as the quality

of the stone of which they were constructed allowed. I learnt later that a number of these rock tombs had been examined in Hyderabad, and that among the remains found in them were fragments of pottery with letter signs inscribed on them, some of which were identical with signs in the Minoan script. So far as I know our dolmens have never been disturbed by the excavator.

The second time we stopped to climb a little hill looking over a backwater, and with a beautiful view, crowned by a large red building into which it was not possible to enter or to see. That, our guide told us, was a temple to Satan, who was originally a Mesopotamian deity.

On a subsequent day Mr. Anandakrishna Iyer took me to call on a Nair household. We were received by a charming young lady of about seventeen years, evidently just a little excited but quite self-possessed. The house, like the Nambudiri one, was built round a square courtyard, but one side of it was only a part of the high outer wall which enclosed the whole compound, two sides were the house proper, a good two-story brick dwelling, with rather high and well-furnished rooms, at least on the upper floor—we did not go into those on the ground-floor. The other side was a one-story building looking like outhouses. The young lady introduced us to a bright-looking boy of about twelve, who was doing algebra with a tutor; she herself could speak English and French and played the piano. Anandakrishna Iyer, when we were in the boy's study, seized an opportunity when our hostess's attention was otherwise engaged to take me to the window, and pointing to the outhouses across the courtyard, whispered, "That is where the men of the tarvad live; this is the women's and children's quarters."

After we had said good-bye, he took me into the compound and round to the back of the house, and showed me the cobra shrine. We also caught a glimpse of the head of the tarvad, an old woman clad in very plain garments, all one dingy colour, sitting still and looking very lethargic.

The Tiyyas stand in somewhat the same relation to the Nairs as the Nairs do to the Nambudiris. They are toddy-climbers by caste, but they also cultivate and exploit the land as small farmers, sometimes renting strips from the Jenmis, and sometimes from Nair kanomdars, who sublet portions of their holdings. Tradition-

ally they are considered untouchable, but that prejudice appears to be abating; at least, a year or two after our visit to Trichur Mr. Richards told me he had met Anandakrishna Iyer again, and he had told him that the Tiyyas were rising in the social scale, the Nairs were taking mistresses from among them. With the Tiyyas also property, when there is any, descends in the female line, so I presume that the mothers and their relatives are solely responsible, in this case also, for the offspring.

Lastly we come to the basis of the social pyramid, the Cherumas, who own no property and who pollute at a considerable distance, which seems to vary from place to place, as I have found it so differently stated. Of one town in Malabar I have heard that the Cherumas' huts are separated by a river crossed by a bridge from the fields where they work, the width of the bridge being less than the distance at which they pollute, so in the morning they have to cross it before anyone else is about, and in the evening wait for opportunities to rush across when the bridge is clear to reach their poor homes. The standard wage for Cherumas employed in paddy cultivation both in Cochin and Malabar was, and I expect still is, 4 lb. of paddy per day for a man, 3 lb. for a woman and 2 lb. for a boy. This had been the wage from time immemorial. Paddy loses a third of its weight in husking, so that a man earned $2\frac{2}{3}$ lb. of rice and a woman 2 lb. per day. As in South India the minimum allowance of rice for a man doing manual work is usually reckoned at 2 lb. per day ($1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. for a woman), it is wonderful that on such pay the workers contrive to rear children enough to maintain the working force. In law their status is that of free labourers; in fact, it approximates to slavery, probably being practically the same as that of the *servi* of Doomsday. Their employers are entitled to demand their services for 365 days in the year from dawn to dark, and are expected to pay them regular wages accordingly, but a little less than the standard day wage is paid when their work is not required. The extras were small; an additional allowance of paddy and some cloth once a year, according to the master's generosity; if a man was employed in tree-climbing he got, in 1917, one coconut for every four trees climbed, and it was considered that a strong and active man, working at top pressure, could collect the nuts of forty trees in a day and earn ten nuts for himself, which he could sell

for an anna each and so earn about tenpence. Men capable of climbing forty of those tall palms in one day must have been very few. The forests supplied some extra nourishment in the form of wild mangoes and jackfruit, and employers supplied one good meal a year, at the *Onam* festival, when the god Parasurama visited some parts of the country, and his rival Mahabili the rest, for one day at the end of August or beginning of September.

Even a Malayali cannot live on rice alone, and so the Cherumas bartered part of their paddy at the local shops for the condiments, salt and chillies, necessary to make rice palatable, and kerosene. One of my students said that they spent about an equal amount on toddy, an expenditure which he regarded as regrettable, but very pardonable in view of the poverty of their diet. Another remarked that they were the most oppressed workers in the world, but also the most contented, because it never occurred to them that conditions could be other than they were.

Mr. Subbarama Iyer gives the following description of their manner of life in Cochin.

They take kanji* and toddy in the morning, toddy in the afternoon, cooked rice at night; they eat also fish and flesh. They behave well, are obedient and honest and loyal to their masters, and very earnest about their work, but are completely illiterate. There are no schools for them in the village. They worship spirits in the shape of stocks and stones; and on the occasion of the festivals of their gods and goddesses they take a good dose of toddy and with drums and bugles and priests dance in the premises of the "temple." . . . They dwell in colonies of two or three families each, in low, small thatched huts near the land of their masters. . . . They are experts in practical agricultural work and can face any sort of weather.†

This statement raises the question, how can the Cherumas get the toddy in the quantities suggested, and the fish and flesh said to form part of their diet? I can give no reliable answers to these questions. With regard to the toddy, perhaps they make it themselves, their masters winking at the illegality. Fish is caught in such great abundance on the coast that it is largely used for manure, and so may sometimes be obtained, by people who are not particular about its condition, practically for nothing. The meat they get

* The water in which rice has been boiled.

† *Some South Indian Villages*, p. 126.

is no doubt mostly the flesh of cattle which have died a natural death.

Manual workers employed in other than agricultural work were not much better paid. Labourers employed for transport got four annas a day, equal to 4d. up to the outbreak of the war, after which its sterling exchange value went up but its purchasing value went down. Members of the artisan castes got from four to six annas a day; carpenters, who were the highest paid, perhaps as much as eight annas. All these, in slack times, earned what they could by agricultural labour.

Mention must be made here of the local Mahomedans, commonly called "Moplas," a corruption of the word "Mappilas," meaning Sons-in-law. They are said to be descendants of Arabs who took wives from among the Hindu women and so became sons-in-law of the heads of households, and of their converts, who were drawn from the lowest castes. Mr. Subbarama's report of those in his own desam is, "They are filthy, their children are filthy, their habits too are filthy," whereas the usual habit of Malayalis is to bathe twice a day.* But Mr. N. Sundara Aiyar says, "The Muhammadan coolies, who are superior both in skill and strength to the Hindus, earn higher wages, both because their labour is worth more and because they are more independent. But their usual wages cannot be stated, as they contract for each job. Such work as splitting rocks, digging wells, splitting logs, and other work demanding skill or strength is mainly done by them. They handle tools better than the Hindus. A strong Muhammadan will carry sacks of grain of 8 paras weighing 160 lb. a distance of two miles half a dozen times in a day, a Hindu coolie will carry only half a sack."†

There is more to be said about the Moplas, which will come later.

The Trichur Zoo, of which, as I have said above, Ananda-krishna Iyer was the curator, was a modest establishment, but very well kept, and decidedly superior to the Madras Zoo. It was a small enclosure, entirely surrounded by a high wall, and did not seem to be much frequented. I was interested in a splendid King Cobra, the biggest of the cobras, which was said to attack without provocation, and to kill almost to a certainty; and in a

* Op. cit., p. 139.

† Op. cit., p. 194.

fine collection of the big carnivores, well housed. Another exceptional exhibit in South India was a long-wooled sheep, which strolled about freely, and cropped the grass, and was evidently a pet. When it passed in front of the cages of the tigers and leopards they looked at it with indifference; but there was a splendid black panther, the most beautiful beast I ever saw, born in the zoo, and when he saw the sheep he got frantic with excitement, the instinct to kill being apparently all the more urgent because it had never been gratified.

Nascent Capitalism in Cochin

If I remember rightly, Anandakrishna Iyer was also Director of Industries and reckoned that third in order of importance of his various jobs. At any rate he saw that I had an opportunity of seeing to what extent modern capitalist industry had secured a footing in Cochin, by giving me introductions to the managers of the two chief factories run by joint-stock companies.

One, the manager of a brick and tile works, was an Indian Christian, who specially interested me because he had the grey eyes which tell of a Nordic strain in the ancestry. Grey and blue eyes are said to be fairly common among the Konkani Brahmins, the Brahmins, that is, of the strip of coast between Bombay and Malabar, which suggests a Nordic infiltration by sea, perhaps in the time of Portuguese conquest. Also blue-eyed people are shown in some of the cave paintings, possibly they were the "White Huns", but the extreme rarity of blue and grey eyes outside the Konkan and Cochin indicates that the theory that the Aryans were Nordics is false. Like their first cousins the Iranians they pretty certainly belonged to Elliot Smith's "brown race".

From the manager I learnt that brick- and tile-making had first started in Cochin twenty-five years before, five years later a second factory (the one under his control, I think) had followed, and then, after a ten-years' interval, these two having made handsome profits, several more were started, and all were being driven into bankruptcy by excessive competition, prices being cut and costs going up as fuel had to be fetched greater and greater distances. I had heard a similar tale at Nelliampatti about sugar refining, and again heard it later on with regard to rice-milling in Tanjore District. This particular manager was trying to get

through the crisis by developing on new lines, making ornamental tiles and other articles, and waiting for the time when the continually growing demand for brick-and-tile houses brought up the price for his main products to a remunerative level.

The increase in the numbers of brick-and-tiled houses during the last pre-war decade was the most striking evidence of the rise in the "standard of living" of the propertied classes in South India at the time, but the increase in the numbers of rice-mills, which followed a little later, was a more important and significant feature of the same sociological change. It indicated the revolt of the average Indian housewife against the daily toil of pounding paddy, and especially of those Brahmin ladies who could not afford to employ servants to do it for them, since Brahmins are not allowed, like other castes, to lighten the toil by parboiling the paddy first, and then drying it in the sun and so loosening the husks. But the polished rice sold by the mills is bereft of the vitamins immediately under the husk, and if it is made too exclusively the chief food, the deficiency disease of *beri-beri* results. Moreover, when the husking is done in the village homes, the husks are used up as cattle food, whereas in the rice-milling towns they are chiefly used as fuel to drive the machinery. In Rangoon, where rice is milled for export, the furnaces can use up only a part of the great quantities of refuse chaff, and the rest is dumped into the river, where it is a nuisance to the harbour authorities. Professor G. Ranga, when working as a student under my supervision, told me that his investigations had led him to the opinion that the release from the necessity of pounding paddy was the reverse of a benefit, the work is done standing upright, by lifting and letting fall the wooden pestle, and is a very beneficial exercise, conducing to good health generally, and particularly to easy delivery in childbirth, and the bearing of healthy children. This is, of course, only a lay opinion, but very likely true, and I doubt whether the employment of Indian capital in this industry deserves the encouragement which has been given to it.

The other factory manager was a Brahman, and his factory a small weaving-mill, the only purely weaving-mill I came across in India, where the cotton-mills are almost universally either for spinning only, selling their yarn to hand-loom weavers, or for spinning and weaving, the weaving departments being frequently

added to original spinning-mills in order to give them an assured outlet for at least part of the yarn they produced. This is because the superiority in productiveness of power-driven machinery over hand labour is far greater in spinning than in weaving. The Trichur factory was pleasantly situated in a shady compound, and was airy and cool, and the workers, who were all Nair women, as scrupulously clean as others of their caste, were a pleasing sight. Here we had the so-called "matriarchy" of the earliest phase of ancient civilization reaching across the ages to link itself with the capitalist exploitation of women's labour in industry which is the root of modern feminism.

From Trichur I returned to Madras early in October, having spent a week in that fascinating little capital, and secured a room in the Madras Club. A day or two afterwards I found myself too ill to dine, borrowed a clinical thermometer, found $2\frac{1}{2}$ degrees of fever, took to my bed, sent for a doctor, who first diagnosed dengue, then, when the symptoms had developed further, dysentery, of which he cured me by fifteen injections of emetine.

CHAPTER XVIII

CO-OPERATION IN CONJIVERAM AND ELSEWHERE

SIR FREDERICK NICHOLSON summed up his report on Co-operative Credit banks as the best means of combating the indebtedness of the Indian peasantry with the words "Find Raiffeisen." "Father Raiffeisen," it need hardly be said, was the originator of the Co-operative Banks movement in Germany during the forties of the last century; and to his personality its success was due during its initial stages. Accordingly, one of the first things I did after reaching Madras was to enquire about the whereabouts of the office of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, and visit it to see what sort of Raiffeisen Nicholson's own province had secured.

I found it in the form of a bungalow, not in good repair, in a compound overgrown with trees, approached by quiet shady roads. I came up quietly on my bicycle, entered the widely opened door, and found a number of clerks gently sleeping behind their desks, with their turbans lying beside the inkpots. I went up to the clerk who appeared, by the size of the table in front of him, to be the chief, and said "Good afternoon." He woke with a start, hurriedly put on his turban, and fingered his clothing to see if it was in decent order, the rest of the staff following his example. I made some enquiry about the whereabouts of the Registrar, and departed.

The Registrar was a non-Brahmin *savant*, who had specialized in the study of the Tamil calendar, on which he had written what was, I believe, the standard work. The Tamil calendar is one of the most interesting in the world; like those of Egypt and Mexico, it is solar. It divides the year into months, determined by the progression of the sun through the twelve divisions of the ecliptic which we call the Signs of the Zodiac, and at the moment when the sun enters a new division, at whatever time of the day or night that moment occurs, a new month begins. I fancy he would have been more interesting and informative on that subject than on Co-operation, but that was not my business, and I never got

really acquainted with him, nor learnt on what lines he was running his department. In fact, I concluded that he was letting it run itself, which perhaps was doing him an injustice. He retired soon afterwards.

He was succeeded by Mr. F. R. Hemingway of the I.C.S., known as "Humming Bird" in Madras Club, who had played, as I was told, for the Bristol Rugby Football Club in his youth, previously the Collector of Coimbatore. I had already got into touch with him, as he had written to me from Coimbatore to tell me that he had been struck by a reported lecture of mine on "The Economy of Communal Expenditure," and he had been preaching my doctrines on the subject in his district, and pointing out to the people how much better value they could get for their money if they put some of it into a common fund for the purpose of improving their roads and water supplies, than by keeping it all for individual spending on such things as jewels for their women-kind. In later letters I learnt that this campaign had gone well at first; the people had been talking the idea over in the villages and gradually coming to the conclusion that it was sound and should be acted on, when news of the movement came to the Brahmin opposition intelligentsia of Madras, and they sent down speakers with the message, "Let the Sirkar pay."

As Registrar of Co-operative Societies Hemingway had the best possible field for preaching the doctrine of self-help and mutual help on which co-operators of all schools also insist, and from the hour of his appointment till he was incapacitated by the disease which killed him, cancer in the throat, he worked strenuously and enthusiastically at making a population of forty million people, mostly illiterate, understand and appreciate co-operative principles, and at guiding their efforts, when these efforts were forthcoming, in the practical application of the doctrine. He was fond of saying, "Co-operation must not be judged by the worst co-operative societies, nor even by the average, but by the best, for they show what is possible." On this principle he suggested to me that I should pay a visit to Conjiveram. I made that visit in September 1917. This was my first halt in the tour which next brought me to Kumbakonam for the birth registration enquiry, and which ended in the journey from Trichur to Madras recorded above.

Conjiveram Weavers

The picture of Conjiveram remains in my memory as a singularly pleasing city comfortably spread out over a relatively large area, with some magnificent temples, mostly Vaishnavite, but with the Saivite ones in the better repair, thanks to Nattukottai donations. It is situated about forty miles south-west of Madras, and is an ancient centre of cotton and silk manufacture, and its hand-loom weavers were still holding their own against mill competition by the artistic qualities of their products. When in the seventeenth century Francis Day made his report that Madras was the best place for securing "paintings" (printed calicoes), Conjiveram was probably the place where those paintings were chiefly produced.

The Co-operative Society to which Hemingway directed my attention was that of the Reddipatti silk-weavers. They all lived together in one quarter of the town, and formed a close community. "Reddipatti" means "town of Reddis," and these Reddis, like those of Eruvellipet, were Telugus settled in the Tamil area. Their god was Subrahmanyam, the peacock-riding God of War, and they claimed that their ancestors came to his aid when he was hard pressed in a battle with devils. It was their rule that when a son was married, the whole community must be invited to the wedding feast, and as their numbers had for many years been steadily growing, the cost of the feast had grown correspondingly, so that, as they told me, sometimes it amounted to as much as four years' income—perhaps they confounded "income" with "possible savings." The Co-operative Society had been originally formed, I understood, to deal with the indebtedness to exorbitant usurers caused by these wedding feasts, and it had been run so well and successfully that it had practically freed the community of debt of that sort. The secretary brought out his books and showed me the dates when loans had been granted to pay off moneylenders, and the dates and amounts of repayment of principal and interest, and the amounts still outstanding. Most of the members were clear, the rest were nearly clear. Encouraged by this success, the society had also tackled the problem of trading debts, due to the custom, practically universal in India, by which the merchants who bought the cloth also supplied the yarn on



DOLMEN, ONE OF A GROUP



TEMPLE TO CHATTAN (? SATAN)

credit, whereby they were able to control prices at both ends. Armed with the bargaining power of the reserve fund which the society had built up, the weavers met the merchants as a combined body, bought yarn for cash, and being thus enabled to sell their cloth to whom they chose, extorted much better prices, and were then full of plans for launching out into other ways of applying the co-operative principle. They had no fears about the future of their industry. They said to me, "Every woman whose husband can afford it will insist on having a Rs. 30 sari" of the sort they produced.

There was another weavers' community, a Tamil one, similarly occupying a defined area on the outskirts of Conjiveram, probably not less interesting, though I learnt little of it. Their quarter was much less crowded, and farther from the centre of the city; it consisted of one broad street, with little houses standing back, and a double row of very fine tamarind trees giving abundant shade and fruit, the common property of the community. Of all workers' quarters which I saw in India theirs was the most attractive.

These two organized communities comprised the local aristocracy of the craft. Less skilled weavers working on cotton and producing cheaper cloth were scattered over the city, and one small master had collected a group, and was trying to organize them on the factory system, setting them to work for wages on his material with his pit-looms, which were placed in a group of little huts. He offered them security at the loss of individual liberty, and as a rule, after a short trial, they found the exchange not to their liking, and the experiment, from the facts supplied to me, seemed likely to be a failure.

Village Factions

Faction fights were a feature of the life of the city as a whole, and their prevention an annual problem for the authorities responsible for the maintenance of order. They were not between Moslems and Hindus, though the feud was a religious one; nor were they between Vaishnavites and Saivites, or Brahmins and non-Brahmins, or Telugus and Tamils. The division was between two sections of Vaishnavites, who had adopted two different patterns of the *naman* to paint on their foreheads. Each section possessed a great temple, but the two together were the owners

of the Vishnu Car, in which the god on his birthday made a triumphal tour of the city drawn by a host of worshippers; and the struggle was for the honour of pulling the ropes. Some years previous to my visit the conflict had reached the pitch of preventing the procession, while the worshippers were trying to settle the question as to who should pull by resorting to fisticuffs, which was a dishonour to the god, likely to be avenged by some general calamity. Then the District Officer intervened, and decreed that one section only should pull each year, while the men of the other section walked with the crowds of women, children, aged and impotent who accompanied the car on its rumbling and toilsome journey, and console themselves by remembering that their turn would come the next year. I forget how it was settled which of the claimants should have the first turn, if not by the toss of a coin, it was by some similar appeal to chance.

In a good many South Indian villages this same splitting into two factions based on absurd differences has much more serious consequences than in Conjiveram. I remember a talk on the subject one evening in Madras Club. It was opened by a judge in words to this effect: "One of the first cases which I was called to decide when I came to India was that of the murder of a villager, of which another man of the same village was accused by the friends of the murdered man. The defence was that the dead man had been murdered by members of the village faction to which he belonged, for the express purpose of injuring the opposite faction to which the accused belonged, and that all the evidence in support of the accusation was fabricated. I thought the whole story was incredible, but on making enquiries I was informed that such cases did occur and not infrequently." It was agreed that they did, and another man said: "Here is an instance that I know personally. In one such two-faction village an old woman said to her son who was supporting her, 'I am old and feeble and can no longer work, or be of any service to you. But I should like still to be of some use. So I want you to kill me and to arrange for the opposing faction to be found guilty of murdering me.' "

At another time I was talking with a friend in the Indian Civil Service about the ethics of the legal profession, which, as I rightly or wrongly believed, sanctioned the conduct of counsel who continued to argue a case to earn his fees, though he knew

it to be false. My friend said that he once, and once only, met with an instance of a *vakil* refusing a case for which an adequate fee was offered, because it was false. "In a certain village in my district there were two factions, A and B. One night faction A held a secret meeting, and decided that B was getting too aggressive and something must be done about it. There was a young man named Guruswami present, and the leaders said to him, 'Guruswami, your father is old, and no longer any use to you. Let us have him to kill, and we will get the B people convicted of murder.' Guruswami consented, and it was agreed that there should be another meeting in a week's time. At that meeting Guruswami, with many apologies, said that he had changed his mind, he could not bear to have his father killed even for so good a purpose. However, another young man was found with an aged father whom he was prepared to sacrifice. The old man was stabbed to death and his dead body was laid down at night in front of the house of one of the leaders of the faction, who straightway informed the police, saying that he and a friend were working late at night, when, looking out of the window, they saw, by the light of the lamp in their room, — and — (two leading members of faction B) kneeling on the victim and murdering him. The two accused men were accordingly arrested and taken to the police station.

"But the policeman who took up the enquiry was a Eurasian and an unusually competent man. He examined the spot where the dead body was found, and the room from which the murder was stated to have been witnessed, and the lamp, and reported that the window was too high and small, and the lamp too feeble, for the alleged witnesses possibly to have seen what they swore they had seen. Accordingly the police declined to prosecute.

"Faction A then enlarged the window, sent to Madras for a good lamp, and appealed to the District head of police. Here again the Eurasian policeman foiled them, for he had kept all his measurements, and swore to them, and to the fact that the lamp now produced was not the one originally shown. Then they proceeded to bring the charge of murder themselves before the law courts. They went to a young Brahmin *vakil* who was just beginning to get a practice, and promised him a handsome fee for taking up the case. But he insisted on being fully informed of the facts,

and when he knew what they were, he refused. Then they applied to a senior man of established reputation, who had no such scruples."

At this stage in the course of events my friend was transferred to another district, and he did not know what the conclusion was.

After hearing of these village feuds, I added another query to my village questionnaire, asking students to state whether the villages they reported on were or were not divided into two hostile factions. Unfortunately I kept no record of the answers, but the impression on my memory is that the proportion so divided was about one in four or five.

Professor W. J. Perry has, I believe, made investigations into the distribution of similar social phenomena in various countries, and attributed their origin to the division of Egypt into two kingdoms in its early historic times. If any origin so remote is to be sought, I would rather find it in the great religious contest between the worshippers of the Moon God and those of the Sun God and Earth Goddess which drove Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, and find a link between India to-day and Mesopotamia then in the fact that some of the Rajahs of Rajputana claim Solar, and the others Lunar descent. The village factions of South India are, I believe, known as right-hand and left-hand factions, at least in some instances; I have not heard of any being known as Solar and Lunar.

Lastly, I must add that when students did report the existence of factions to me, the report usually took the form of something like this: "There is very little crime in the village because when any offence against the law is committed the members of the opposite faction immediately inform the police."

Although the Reddipatti Weavers are an urban community their successful bank was on the Raiffeisen model, based on the principle of the unlimited liability of all members for the bank's debts, which in Europe is recognized as suitable only for villages, where the members can know one another, and admit only suitable and reliable men. In India, under the social institution of occupational castes, these conditions are nearly as likely to be found in towns, and the Servants of India Society were in my time active in promoting co-operative banks among the cotton operatives of Bombay. In Madras I was shown the books of a domestic

servants' Co-op., which used an outhouse in the compound of the Bishop's house as an office, which probably owed its existence to Mrs. Whitehead's encouragement. It was formed to free its members from debts to moneylenders; this it had done, by advancing sufficient sums, the loans from the bank were being repaid by regular monthly instalments, and when I saw the books, the repayments were nearly completed, and the bank was shortly to be wound up.

How great the benefit of Raiffeisen Banks may be to urban wage-earners in India can be understood when it is remembered that wages are paid monthly. Once when I was taking a party of students round one of the twin cotton-mills (the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills managed by Binny & Co.), as we were on the point of leaving, I asked the foreman who showed us round, "How many of these men are in debt?" He said, "Every man jack of them."

Business firms derived, or thought they derived, a triple advantage out of the monthly payment. There was first the economy in the clerical department, through the reduction in the number of pay-days from fifty-two to twelve a year, and the sums being paid out mainly in rupees instead of mainly in small change; secondly, the advantage of having the use of a considerable quantity of capital belonging to the operatives without paying interest on it; and, thirdly, the fact that the worker was more effectively tied, since if he left before the month was out, he would not find it easy to get the wages owing to him. In Madras, wages for one month were paid at the beginning of the next; Bombay mill-owners, in order to get the above advantages in fullest measure, held up the payments for two or three weeks longer, so that an operative always had at least those two or three weeks' pay owing to him, rising to as much as six or seven weeks.

Of the Credit Banks in the villages it may be said that some were good, some not so good. In one village where I had a talk with the secretary, I found that he was himself one of the chief moneylenders, and, having the complete control of the bank in his own hands, was locally credited with managing it entirely in his own interest. The only preventive of such abuse obviously lies in the development of education and public spirit, and Hemingway was doing his utmost, by organizing district and provincial

co-operative conferences, to fan the usually feeble glow of enthusiasm for the co-operative ideal into a stronger blaze.

The Vadamalaipuram Co-operative Society

Of the good societies, the best that I became acquainted with was that of Vadamalaipuram in the Ramnad district, of which a full report was supplied to me by my research student Mr. K. Ramachandran, the son of the Brahmin schoolmaster of the village. It was formed in the year 1909 on the initiative of the only other Brahmin in the village, Mr. Ananda Rao, with thirteen members and a capital of Rs.65. It was registered for a maximum number of two hundred members and borrowing powers limited to Rs.20,000. On June 30, 1916, it had seventy-four members owning Rs.1,582 share capital, owed Rs.12,478 to the Madura-Ramnad Central Bank, borrowed at not more than $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and lent to members at not more than 9 per cent, had built up a reserve fund of Rs.933, and owned furniture valued at Rs.180 after depreciation. During the year it had granted seventy-nine loans to members of a total amount of Rs.2,642, of which Rs.1,990 was for purchase of cattle and other agricultural purposes, Rs.233 for trade, Rs.280 for discharge of prior debts, and Rs.30 for education. The private moneylenders' rates were 12 to 24 per cent for large, and 48 per cent for small loans.

A special feature of this society was that there were no loans for marriages. Such loans are deprecated in strict Raiffeisen theory, which holds that all loans should be for productive purposes. But in Indian villages there is a special reason for them. Wedding festivities are prolonged, and in the case of a relatively well-to-do family, the whole village expects to be invited, and poorer people have to spend in proportion to their means. The cost has to be met out of capital, and for lack of savings is almost invariably met by borrowing. If the money is borrowed from a private money-lender, there is no counterpoise to the pressure put upon the father of the bridegroom, in his desire for prestige and popularity, to push expenditure up to the maximum; but if there is a Co-operative Society in the village which will grant loans for marriages, he applies to that instead, and the other members will be anxious not to let him have a bigger loan than he can repay in reasonable time, and not to allow the funds to be so much depleted that they

will be unable to get loans when they want them. Hence loans for the two "unproductive purposes" of marriages and discharge of prior debts are among the most useful activities of Co-operative Credit Banks in India.

Mr. Ramachandran gave the following explanation of the absence of loans for marriages in Vadamalaipuram:

The marriages are all post-puberty. There was only one pre-puberty marriage in the village and that was the marriage of the son* of the secretary of the Co-operative Society who is a Raoji Brahmin. Marriage of girls is generally between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. There is no purdah, and women work as hard as men. It is a familiar sight to see them in the morning hours plucking weeds in the fields, or plucking cotton, tobacco or senna. They wield great influence at home. One custom peculiar to the village is that all the villagers contribute according to their status towards the expenses of the marriages and funerals in the village. The marriage expenses are not very high and a marriage or death in a family does not mean a huge debt to that family, but is distributed.†

With regard to the effect of the advent of the Co-operative Society on the life of the village, Mr. Ramachandran said, "a new spirit has come over the villagers." They ceased to resort to the law courts, and got their disputes settled by the village *panchayat*; which, stirred by the same spirit in 1915, secured a grant of Rs.1,000 through the Co-operative Society and contributed Rs.400 out of the village funds to construct a good macadamized road through the village and a drain through the main street, and appointed a scavenger at Rs.2 per month to keep the street clean, and look after the drains. Seven and a half per cent of the profits of the Society went to the maintenance of an elementary school where attendance was free, and in addition all the members

* Among Brahmins the pre-puberty marriage of girls was then compulsory. When it was forbidden by statute, Brahmins acquired the option of postponing the marriages of their daughters in obedience to the law, or of obeying tradition. In the above case it must not be inferred that the bridegroom was under age. Consummation of pre-puberty marriages before puberty was rare, and considered disgraceful, but it was usually considered obligatory immediately afterwards.

† Op. cit., p. 42.

‡ As we should say, "parish council." From Sanscrit *panch*, five, the conventional number for a village council or a committee, of which the actual members may be more or less than five. The Vadamalaipuram panchayat had sixteen members.

agreed to give it the dividends they received. This school, which was attended by some Panchama boys as well as by caste boys and girls, had a museum, chiefly of seeds of cultivated plants, a library of forty volumes, and a school garden divided into plots for individual cultivation; and it educated the children in the theory and practice of co-operation. In 1913 a "Co-operative Society for Purchase and Sale" was formed, which dealt in agricultural implements, fodder, cotton seed, and leather for the making of buckets for water-lifts. The stimulus to mutual help supplied by Mr. Ananda Rao was the more necessary as the village was suffering from the effects of the war, since it produced cotton and senna for export, and because the local industries of spinning and weaving had been killed by mill competition.

The seed of Co-operation here was sown on relatively good ground, as well as being well planted and watered, and this may be attributed to the fact that its social tradition was exceptional and there was much less social and economic inequality than in most South Indian villages. Nearly all the caste villagers owned land, but no one more than 170 acres, and also some of the Panchamas (Adi Dravidas); but no one sub-let, and even the richest man in the village carried his own plough to his fields on his shoulder.* The permanent labourers, fifty-three in number, though of castes considered untouchable, took their meals (three per day) in their employers' houses, and got in addition wages from Rs.50 to 60 per year; men on daily wages got 5 to 8 annas per day, women 4 to 6 according to the season.

The caste distribution of the population of the village is given by Mr. Ramachandran as consisting of 100 families of *Nayakars*, 14 of various artisan castes, 12 of Telugu shepherds, 6 of Maravars, 21 of Pallans, the untouchable caste of rice cultivators, 9 of Chakkiliyans, the untouchable caste of leather workers, 2 of Brahmans, and 2 Vellalas, the Tamil land-owning caste. Now *Nayak*, or *Naik*, is an alternative caste name of the Telugu land-

* This man, Narayanaswami Nayakar by name, employed seven shepherds and herdsmen and one domestic servant, paying Rs.300 in wages for the year, which they probably supplemented by collecting manure for sale. In this village cowdung was not used as domestic fuel, but nearly all as manure, and the small remainder for heating the tyres of oxcarts. *Some South Indian Villages*, pp. 48 and 36.

owning caste also known as Reddis; and *Nayakar* is an honorific plural of *Nayak*, formed according to Tamil, and not Telugu grammar, in which the plural of *Nayak* is *Nayakulu*. The Nayakars had no need of the religious services of Brahmins, having priests of their own caste. They are Vaishnavites and contributed handsomely, Rs.2,000 in 1914, to the maintenance of the temple at Tiruttangal built to commemorate a visit of Vishnu to his non-Brahmin mistress Nachiyar. Hence the village of Vadamalaipuram, which also has the more significant name of *Kondu-Reddi-Patti*, is an ancient military settlement in the extreme south, of Nayak or Reddi rank and file under Maravar officers, established there in order to maintain the authority of the Vijayanagar emperors, in the midst of Nadars (or Shanars), who were obstinate defenders of local independence. It has been mentioned above that in consequence of the Vijayanagar conquest, the Nadars have been, as a caste, reduced to the status of toddy-climbers, but some of them, in the neighbourhood of Kondureddipatti, had taken to moneylending, and many of the Nayakars of that village had become deeply indebted to them. Thus Time brings revenge.

While the Co-operative movement officially fostered in India with the prime objective of freeing peasants and craftsmen from the burden of usurious debt has directed its main efforts towards the establishment of village banks, it has also created urban banks on the Schultze-Delitsch model, which are essentially savings banks for creditors, as the village banks are banks for borrowers. The official policy in Madras was to link these together, so as to make the urban bank in the chief town of any district the central bank for its district, and to arrange for its Board of Directors to be in part elected by its own shareholders, but to include also representatives of the village societies. Thus, in the particular case of Vadamalaipuram, the village bank, which had on June 30, 1916, share capital of Rs.1,582, and local deposits of only Rs.123, was carrying on its business by means of a loan of Rs.12,478 from the Urban bank in Madura, officially known as the Madura-Ramnad* Central Bank, and of this Mr. Ananda Rao was a Director. While Mr. Hemingway was Registrar

* The city of Madura serves as the capital of both the Districts of Madura and Ramnad, since in Ramnad there is no town from which the various parts of the District can be so conveniently reached.

schemes were under discussion for supplementing these Central Banks for particular Districts by establishing an Apex Bank for the whole Presidency, which should be responsible to them, and be their medium for drawing funds from the general money market; and Sir Bernard Hunter was also putting forward suggestions for a modification of the regulations under which the Presidency Banks worked in order to make it possible for them to finance the co-operative banks without incurring the risk of locking up short-term deposits in long-term loans. In this way it was hoped to remedy to some extent one of the worst defects of the Co-ops., the inability of even the best of them to deal with more than a fraction of the debt burden in their respective villages.

The Triplicane Urban Co-operative Society

Before leaving the subject mention must be made of another Co-operative Society, which owed nothing to official assistance in its origin, having actually begun before the first law relating to Co-operative Societies was enacted, and drawing its inspiration, *not from Germany, but from our own Rochdale Pioneers*. Its early history was curious.

When Mr. Joseph Chamberlain launched his campaign for Imperial Preference, a number of members of the staff of the Presidency College in Madras formed a society for discussion of the effects of his scheme, if carried out, on India. When it was clear that there was no immediate prospect that it would be carried out, they enlarged the scope of their discussions, and invited outside lecturers. In this way they received a visit from a Bengali from Calcutta who was an enthusiast for Co-operation, and under his prompting studied the history and principles of the British movement, and after prolonged debate came to the conclusion that what the twenty-eight Rochdale flannel-weavers had done they could do. Hence the "Triplicane Urban Co-operative Society" came into existence in 1904, and speedily attained great success, forming branches, of mostly Brahmin membership, in all parts of the city of Madras. Then the leader of the movement, a member of the Provincial Educational Service, whose enthusiasm and resolution had carried the Society through its early difficulties, was transferred from the Presidency College to that in Kumbakonam, and though the Society continued to flourish moderately,

it ceased to grow perceptibly. Nevertheless it was, and has continued to be to the present day, the largest Society on the Rochdale model in India, and Mr. Hemingway thought he saw in it great unrealized possibilities. He prompted me to apply for membership, and though it was practically impossible for me to do any buying at its stores, I was readily admitted, and I brought in Mr. Vaidyanathan, one of the University Readers in Economics.

I attended the next annual members' meeting, arriving a little late. It was held in a large upstairs room over the shops of the original and central store. I was the only European member of the Society, and when I arrived a chair was brought to me; all the other members were squatting on the floor, a good many of them chewing betel; but the reports submitted were all in English, and all the proceedings in English, although almost all the members were Tamils.

Hemingway's idea was that the enthusiasm of the Society had waned because the management was too centralized, and he was working on a plan for making each branch independent, and converting the parent Society into a Co-operative Wholesale, of which the branches should be the original members, but which should also admit to membership other societies for sale and purchase throughout the Presidency. The whole scheme seemed to me premature and too ambitious, and I doubted his diagnosis, in view of the fact that in Great Britain experience had proved the desirability of amalgamating all the Co-ops. in any particular town except London, and in London of amalgamating neighbouring societies as far as possible. With Vaidyanathan's help I made my own diagnosis in the light of my experience with the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society during twelve years' residence in Woolwich.

The conclusions I came to were that the account-keeping was too elaborate and expensive, because devised on the principle that no employee could be trusted; that the margin between ordinary wholesale and retail prices was, owing to the intense competition between private traders, much smaller than in England, and did not allow of any but very small dividends to purchasers; and that the Brahmin Directors, many of them trained in the law, were too ready to argue to be able to get through the business before them promptly and efficiently. These were not matters in which

the Registrar could help. But there was one thing his office could do.

When the Co-operative Societies Act of 1904 was passed, granting various advantages to registered societies, the Triplicane Society applied for registration, but as the Act contemplated Co-operative Banks only, it was difficult to bring it within the scope of the Act. The difficulty in course of time was got over by attaching a banking department for which a fund was set aside out of which loans could be made to members. But registration, while conferring certain advantages, also brought with it a very serious disadvantage. The accounts had to be audited by the Registrar's department, and, perhaps because the clerks there were only familiar with those of credit banks, the auditing was always very much delayed. When I joined the Society I found that there had usually been an interval of a year, and on the last occasion one of eighteen months, before the end of a half-year and the presentation of the accounts and balance-sheet to the members and the declaration of the dividend on purchases. I pointed out that this was in itself enough to damp down interest in the Society's affairs, and urged that if the Department could not arrange to audit promptly, arrangements should be made for the Society to have its own audit, and submit provisional reports subject to confirmation and correction by the Department.

The audit was accelerated and Hemingway's interposition had a very healthy effect on the Society. It revived the sense among the members that their Society was something of great potential importance, embodying a principle which might be as serviceable in India as in England, and not long after the members' meeting described I had the pleasure of attending an enthusiastic members' rally in a palatial house and large compound lent for the purpose.

Hemingway did not proceed further in the matter of developing a Co-operative Wholesale; he was fully occupied until he was incapacitated by his fatal illness with the problem of using co-operative institutions to cope with the effects of rapid fluctuations of prices on the livelihood of the vast numbers of hand-loom weavers in the Presidency, and I never got into touch in the same way with his successors.

CHAPTER XIX

THE INDIAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION

Nor long after I began work in Madras, Mr. C. J. Hamilton, Minto Professor of Indian Economics in the University of Calcutta, launched a *Bengal Journal of Economics*; a new departure which I welcomed. After a short interval there appeared also the *Indian Journal of Economics*, issued from Allahabad University, under the editorship of Mr. H. Stanley Jevons, the Professor of Indian Economics, whose arrival in India had preceded mine by about eighteen months. When the first copy of this appeared in Madras, I was asked, I forget by whom, "Now, I suppose, you will be starting a Madras Journal of Economics?" I said that I certainly should not; one Journal of Economics was good, two were already too many, since as yet there was neither in India a large enough reading public to give them adequate support, nor a sufficient number of competent contributors. I wanted to co-operate with my colleagues in other Indian Universities, and not to compete with them.

In this sense I wrote to Jevons and Hamilton, who both welcomed the idea of co-operation, and in course of correspondence during 1917 we worked out a plan for organizing an Indian Economic Association to be inaugurated at a conference to be held in Calcutta with Hamilton as President during the ensuing Christmas vacation. The Syndicate of Madras University approved, and undertook to pay my travelling expenses, and on January 27th I took train for Calcutta, sharing a compartment with four Japs, part of an army of commercial agents engaged in the preliminary work of the Japanese exploitation of the Indian market. The Japanese cotton-mills were working day and night shifts, and their cotton magnates busily building new mills and enlarging old ones, and importing up-to-date American machinery, while Bombay and other Indian mill-owners were prevented by various causes from taking similar measures for increasing output, and were content to gather enormous profits out of the enhanced prices caused by the shortage of imported Lancashire goods.

I had time before the conference to accept a kind invitation

from Mr. Holman, the superintendent of the Government Brass Foundry at Ishapore, to pay him a visit. Ishapore is near Barrackpore, and the two suburbs of Calcutta together serve a similar purpose to that of the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, where Mr. Holman had once been employed, and had become acquainted with me when attending a class in the Woolwich Polytechnic.

Between his times in Woolwich and Ishapore, Mr. Holman had been in charge of a brass foundry in Birmingham. When I asked him how his Indian workers compared with those in England, he said that his fully-trained men were well up to the Birmingham standard. In Ishapore the shifts contained half as many men again, but they worked twelve-hour instead of eight-hour shifts, and maintained a slightly greater rate of working, so that they turned out a slightly greater daily output per man. They were not Bengalis, but almost all of them came from the United Provinces, and they habitually took two months' holiday in the year, returning to their native villages to help in the fields during the busiest season of the agricultural year. Mr. Holman entirely approved of this custom; he said the men returned rested and invigorated in body and in mind, and he considered that these annual holidays were essential for the efficient working of the foundry. This view was the more interesting to me as the commonly expressed view was that it was a misfortune both for themselves and for their employers that workers in the expanding urban industries of modern types in India remained villagers at heart, and refused to settle down contentedly in factory towns to breed a race of specialized operatives, like the spinners and weavers of Lancashire.

The Calcutta conference was entirely successful in its main purpose. There were interesting discussions on urgent economic problems, and there was sufficient support to make it clear that the proposed association could be launched successfully. It was agreed that there should be annual conferences in different cities, that papers to be read should be submitted beforehand and published afterwards, and, on the invitation of Mr. E. J. Anstey, Principal of the Sydenham College of Commerce in Bombay, that the next conference should be held there in January 1919. At that conference a formal constitution was drafted and approved. The question of the choice of a medium of publication for the

^{*}proceedings had been too delicate to be settled at Calcutta, but during the ensuing year it settled itself, though in an unfortunate way. Calcutta University then and for many years afterwards was dominated by Sir Ashutosh Mukerji, and the relationship between him and Hamilton was not a happy one. Hamilton's position became very difficult, and finally he resigned and accepted a post in the Indian Educational Service; meanwhile the *Bengal Journal of Economics* ceased publication. At Bombay, therefore, it was decided that the proceedings of the Association should be published in the *Indian Journal of Economics*, and Jevons accepted the posts of Honorary Secretary of the Association and Editor of its Proceedings. It is chiefly due to him that the Association and the *Journal* were well established.

In January 1920 the annual conference was held in Madras, and in 1921 in Allahabad.

Our most important subject of discussion at Calcutta was the problem of Indian currency. The principle of a "managed currency" had been accepted for India in 1894, the volume of rupees in circulation being controlled, and the exchange, by means of sales of "Councils"^{*} and Reverse Councils,[†] manipulated so as to keep the sterling value of the rupee as close as possible to 1s. 4d. Up to the end of 1917 this was achieved with a fair measure of success, but the progress of the war brought an increasing strain. Difficulties of transport hindered exports and imports equally, reducing the volume of trade and increasing prices, but, owing to the great disparity of purchasing power between India and the countries that imported Indian produce, the rise in the average prices of Indian exports was much greater than in the average prices of imports. Hence the balance due to India to be

* "Councils" or "Council Bills" were drafts, sold by the Secretary of State in London for sterling, enabling the purchaser to receive rupees in Calcutta, Bombay or Madras. They enabled the Secretary to meet the "Home Charges" on the Government of India, and were met out of the proceeds of Indian taxation. They are in demand by traders to pay for the excess of exports over imports of Indian merchandise, which is itself due to the Indian need to sell that excess abroad to secure the means of paying the taxes levied to meet these "home charges." Indian Currency is now controlled by the Indian Reserve Bank.

† "Reverse Councils" were sterling drafts on the Secretary of State sold for rupees in India. The sale of them was a measure resorted to as a last resource to maintain the sterling value of the rupee in an emergency.

met by the movement of gold or currency was greatly increased, and as further the export of gold to India was stopped, the whole of that balance had to be defrayed by merchants by buying Council bills. This extra demand for rupees tended inevitably to drive up their sterling value, and the India Office was at its wits' end to find means of checking the rise. Its difficulties were greatly enhanced by the heavy exports of silver rupees to pay Indian troops abroad, which threatened the convertibility of the paper rupee.

My own view, which I expressed unhesitatingly in the Calcutta conference, was that the attempt was a mistake; that a rise in the sterling value of the rupee was the best way of adjusting financial relationships, as it would check exports and stimulate imports. No one else expressed a decided opinion, and, naturally, what was said in Calcutta at an economic conference had no effect on the India Office. The Government of India set to work to manufacture paper rupees to meet the demand for them at prices very slightly in advance of the pre-war figure of 1s. 4d., and the quantity of paper rupees put into circulation was increased fivefold. Even then it only constituted about a quarter of the total volume of currency in circulation, since the silver rupee was the ordinary medium of payment; but already the difficulty of proceeding further had become apparent. Paper rupees had to be cashed in silver on presentation at Government treasuries, and the world price of silver had risen and was rising, partly in consequence of troubles in Mexico, which cut down the world's annual output by nearly a third, and partly of the great demand in China, whose trade was affected by the war in a similar way to that of India. As the quantity of paper rupees increased, the desire to get them cashed also increased, and the problem of getting enough silver for coinage was becoming desperate, though the situation was kept secret from the Indian public. At the nick of time the President of the United States came to the rescue by selling to India a vast store of hoarded silver dollars, at prices which enabled rupees to be coined at a cost of 1s. 6d. each, the pre-war cost having been only 8d. This enabled the rupee exchange to be kept down to that level until after the armistice, when a fresh currency crisis occurred.



CHERMAS CARRYING PLOUCHS AND HARROWS



UMBRIAN MAKER CARRYING HIS WARES TO MARKET

CHAPTER XX

JUTE-MILLS AND THE MANAGING AGENT SYSTEM

JEVONS and I both put up at the Great Eastern Hotel. He had already formed contacts with a number of Calcutta business men, and when the conference was over I was glad to avail myself of one or two of his introductions.

We visited together a jute-mill situated, as most of them are, at some distance from the city, and lower down the Hugli. It was closed for the day, but we saw the "coolie lines," in which the mill-owners housed their employees, almost all of whom came from outside Bengal. For Bengal is a singularly rich country, in which the soil, to an unmeasured depth, is a rich alluvium of inexhaustible fertility, and the rainfall so certain and abundant that when local famines occur they are caused, not by droughts, but by floods. But it is also very malarious, and hookworm disease, called with us "miners' ankylostomiasis," is also very prevalent, and that also is very debilitating, though less so than malaria. The peasantry are only inadequately protected by the law from the rapacity of the landlords. In a good season, when better fed than usual, they make a sufficiently good fight against malaria to bring up the birth-rate above the death-rate, in a bad season it falls below; but neither in good seasons nor in bad do they leave their homes to seek work in the Calcutta mills.

As in most things, the coolie lines could be described as good or bad, according to the standard applied. If we consider that a fair comparison would be with the courts and cellars in which our factory population was housed a hundred years ago according to the reports of Royal Commissions and Select Committees, they were admirably sanitary. They consisted of long lines of sheds, soundly constructed of bricks and mortar, with tiled roofs and cemented alleys between them, sloping down to central gutters. These sheds were divided into two-room apartments, arranged back to back, front rooms for ordinary purposes, inner rooms for the women, the whole embodying an average mill manager's

conception of a proper provision of shelter for "hands," but to me singularly unattractive homes for human beings.

On the other hand the Bengal zemindari class does multiply, and, impoverished by its own excessive numbers, crowds into Calcutta University and into clerical professions, regarding manual work as impossibly degrading. Of those who secure admission, only a minority attain the coveted degree of B.A., still fewer that of M.A.; in many cases, first the family resources, and then the "bridegroom price" which a promising youth can get from his father-in-law with his bride, are exhausted before the full course has been completed, and the examinations are a gamble. But even if he fails the ex-undergraduate may be able to proclaim his superior education by putting the initials F.A. (First Arts) after his name, which means that he has passed the intermediate examination between matriculation and the B.A.; or, better still, "Failed B.A." which declares that he has also completed the course and sat for the final examination. Hence, while Bengal imports manual workers, the Bengal intelligentsia and clerical workers overflow all northern India, where Bengali *Babus* man the Government and railway offices.

The mercantile class in Calcutta had also been increasing rapidly in numbers and wealth, and the higher classes of workers in the jute-mills, the foremen, clerks, and the more highly skilled operatives, were Bengalis. Of these, so far as I could gather, some were Brahmins, but more belonged to the special local caste of *Kayasts*, I was informed, originally Brahmins. The caste originated at the time of the Mahomedan conquest of Bengal, when the conquerors tried to destroy Brahmin influence by compelling Brahmins to eat beef, and turned out of their employment all who refused. The Brahmins, on their side, outcasted all who submitted, who then organized themselves in a separate caste.

I was informed by one mill manager, and the statement was confirmed on enquiry by others, that every operative, in order to keep his job, had to pay blackmail to the Brahmin or Kayasth *babus*. When I returned to Madras, I asked whether Brahmins employed in business concerns practised the same oppression, and was assured that they did not. But I have heard worse accounts of the corruption in Bombay mills exercised by foremen, particularly at the cost of women workers.

Jevons went back to Allahabad, I stayed on another day or two in Calcutta, desiring to see more of the jute industry and to learn more about the Managing Agent system, which probably originated in Calcutta, and had reached its highest development there. I pursued both objects simultaneously by asking permission of the firm of Messrs. Andrew Yule & Son to visit one of the jute-mills controlled by them. This firm was, and is still, I believe, the greatest of all the firms of that sort. Andrew Yule, the founder, was nicknamed "The White Baniah" on account of the great number and variety of his enterprises, and to-day the firm controls eighty different companies, among which collieries, jute-mills and tea estates predominate. The firm, like nearly all Indian Managing Agency firms, was a private company, and when Andrew's son David, who succeeded him, died a few years ago, he was currently estimated to have left a fortune of twenty millions sterling. He had cut himself off from European society, and my Madras students told me that the actual working head of the business in my time was a Madrasi Brahmin from Tanjore.

I called at the office, which was situated a little off the main streets, and was first interviewed by the head of the Jute Section. After a little talk he gave me a note of introduction to the man in charge of the Howrah Mill, and I went upstairs to seek him. On the first floor I had in front of me a long corridor, lined on both sides with teak doors and brass plates inscribed with the names of managed companies. I found the right office; the occupant was a young man not long out from England, and he fixed up an appointment to meet me at the mill next day.

Howrah is the part of Calcutta on the right bank of the Hugli, connected with the city proper by one bridge only, the Howrah bridge, across which there is a great deal of traffic, for the two trunk lines to Bombay and Madras have each their terminus in Howrah. It is a densely populated working-class quarter, and the mill stood just beyond the urban area on the bank of the river, with open country beyond, a very pleasant site. The mill manager, who was, I believe, a Dundee Scot, showed me round. The jute is grown in Bengal, soaked in ponds by the village growers, "retted" as the process is called, and partially rotted, to enable the fibre to be separated easily from the rest of the tissues, and then transported to the mills in bales. There it is soaked in a mix-

ture of oil and water, which softens the fibre and makes it pliable. Originally whale oil was used, and the industry, in its modern form, was created by Dundee whalers, when the growth of gas-lighting was cutting down the demand for their oil, in order to find a profitable outlet for it. Mineral oil has been found to be an adequate substitute, and whale oil is now superseded. After being so prepared, the fibre is spun into yarn and woven into cloth.

The products of the Indian jute-mills are yarn for cordage, Hessian cloth, and gunny bags. In the war period the whole output of gunny bags was requisitioned for use as sandbags in the making of trenches, and the mills were earning very high rates of profit, which became enormous after the armistice when they could sell the bags for their ordinary use in the grain trade in an open market which had been starved for three years.

The most interesting process to watch was the spinning; in this as in cotton-mills, boys were employed, but worked differently. In the Madras cotton-mills, the "little piecers," as the attendant imps of spinning machines are called in Lancashire, had each a section of the machinery where the yarn is wound on bobbins to watch, and their business was to seize the two ends whenever any thread broke, and tie them together again with a little twist of their nimble fingers, each one working independently. In the jute-mills they were organized in gangs of about twenty; and, presumably because the long jute fibres did not break, their work was simply to remove the bobbins when filled and replace them with empties, under the direction of a spinner, who did the watching, while they squatted at ease on the ground. At the right moment he whistled, and then the boys rushed at the machine, pulled off full bobbins and set the empties going, with astonishing rapidity, and then returned, laughing and chattering, to their resting-place.

I had a talk on the Managing Agency system with Mr. Howie-son, the head of an old-established firm. He could tell me little about its origin; when I suggested that the Agency firms were originally mercantile businesses, he said that while that was so in a number of instances, in other cases they had been started as managing agents in the beginning. I then asked him about the proportion of Indian to European capital in the proprietorship of the jute-mills; he said that it might be about half and half,

but it was impossible to say, as a great deal was in the form of bearer shares, for which Indians had a strong preference, which changed hands without any record in the books of the company. A year or so afterwards there was a Government enquiry into the question, and the conclusion was reached that Indians owned 55 per cent of the capital of the industry. At the present time the proportion appears to be currently estimated at about 60 per cent, but the management is unaffected by the change in ownership.

It is easy to work out a hypothetical explanation of the origin of the system, bearing in mind the fact that the East India Company lost its monopoly of trade in India in 1813, that it long before had failed to make its statutory monopoly effective, and that in 1833 it had to give up trading altogether, and leave the field to unchartered companies, and individual traders and trading partnerships. The larger companies increased their capital resources by inviting deposits and paying high rates of interest on them, and from this practice joint-stock banking in India originated. At the same time a number of ex-employees of the East India Company and others, who had been too long settled in the country to be at home in their own, were seeking opportunities of exploiting the natural resources of India and native labour to their own advantage. When they succeeded in founding profitable businesses, and for any reason such as death, retirement, or desire to leave India, were obliged to give up the management, the best resource would usually be to transfer it to some joint-stock company permanently domiciled in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

That, I take it, is how the Managing Agency system originated, and this view seems to be supported by the fact that it has also appeared in South America, where also European enterprise found fields for activity in tropical and sub-tropical lands unsuitable for permanent residence for the enterprisers.

But once established, the system grew with the growth of large-scale business and machine industry—here we are in the region of ascertained fact—because it was profitable to the mercantile firms that thus expanded the scope of their activities, and because they had special advantages in the launching of industrial joint-stock companies. From this point of view of profits, the system is the most perfect example extant of playing the game “Heads I win, tails you lose.” If the subsidiary company makes

profits, the managing agents skim off the cream; if it loses money, all the loss falls on the shareholders; as long as the company continues to exist, the managing agents will still draw something from whatever money may be left, for commissions and expenses.

On the other hand Indian capital is notoriously "shy." People who save money invest it by preference in the purchase of land, from which, owing to high prices due to excessive competition, the return may be only 2 or 3 per cent, or in jewels, from which the return is purely psychological. In order to be induced to take up shares in a new enterprise, investors must be attracted by a prospect of very high profits, and encouraged by seeing well-known names among the sponsors. Hence the enterprising Indian, who desires to found a business requiring more capital than he can supply out of his own resources with what he can raise from friends and relations, is obliged to go to some established firm and enter into a contract with it to be the managing agents, before he can expect any response to an appeal for capital from the investing public. The contract, once entered into, is normally permanent; Bombay firms being specially ingenious in drawing up contracts by which the shareholders are deprived of all liberty of action, and have to submit, if the company is mismanaged, to seeing the value of their property disappear while the agents suck out all the juice in the orange.

Usually the contract provides for a definite minimum sum to be paid monthly or annually to the agents, together with a definite percentage of the net profits. In the early days of the Bombay cotton-mill industry, the agents regularly got a defined sum on every unit of output, and therefore increased production as fast as possible irrespective of the prices at which the yarn and cloth could be sold; a policy which no doubt contributed to the rapid growth of the industry in the face of Lancashire competition, but made the shareholders complain that their interests were being sacrificed. The Tata firm pride themselves on their founder, Jamsetji Tata, having initiated the commission on profits system in the Bombay mills to harmonize the interests of the managed and managing firms.

It was not only in the matter of securing capital that the Managing Agent system assisted in the growth of the Indian cotton industry. Three requisites for its success were mastery of the

technique of buying the raw material, of selling the product, and of manufacture. Mercantile firms previously engaged in the export of Indian raw cotton, and in the importation and sale up-country of Lancashire yarn and cloth, were already equipped in two of these three requisites, and, by their business contacts with Lancashire, had special facilities for getting the best advice with regard to the planning of factories, the purchase and working of machinery and the recruiting of competent mill managers and foremen. The extra cost of paying Lancashire recruits salaries high enough to induce them to emigrate was easily met out of the difference in the wages of operatives. In 1916 I calculated, on the basis of the information supplied to me by the managers of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, that wages cost of weaving per yard of cloth was only one-third of that in pre-war Lancashire, and in spinning the disproportion must have been more, as the heads of that department assured me that the half-timers who worked there were little if at all inferior to English "little piecers."

In the case of adults, the comparison is less favourable to the Indian worker. After adolescence Indian boys too frequently lose the alertness which characterizes them as urchins, a change due to various climatic and social causes, among which too early marriage and parentage, excessive sexual indulgence and indulgence in narcotic drugs, particularly those derived from the hemp plant, and the cumulative effects of infection with malaria and hook-worm, should probably be included, together with the inadequacy of the wages. But the English factory hand is also handicapped by poor health, though not to the same degree, and the allegation, so repeatedly put forward by Bombay manufacturers, that the lowness of the wages they pay is counterbalanced by the relative inefficiency of their workers, is a deliberate misrepresentation of the facts, and the statistics of relative output per worker put forward to support it are misleading. The real explanation of the fact that output per head in Lancashire is two or three times as high as in India, is that since in India labour is cheap and machinery rather dear, the mill manager there is much more anxious to get maximum output per loom or spindle than maximum output per operative. We might put the comparison fairly accurately by amending the familiar statement that our manufacturing towns breed a C3 population, by saying that Indian manufacturers with

C₃ workers compete against their English rivals employing C₂ workers. The difference is much more marked in the higher ranks. Just as proverbially "the bad workman blames his tools," we may say that the bad employer blames his employees, or apply Napoleon's saying, "There are no bad soldiers, only bad officers."

Here we come to another merit of the Managing Agency system, and the one by which it offers real, and not merely competitive advantages. It was pointed out to me by a Madras Brahman, who also, rather exceptionally, was a business man. An Indian joint-stock company, he said, managed by its own directors, is always managed inefficiently. The directors are jealous of their authority, and reluctant to delegate it in any degree; all decisions, whether urgent or not, have to be made in board meetings, at which the directors argue volubly, and very likely the meeting breaks up before coming to a decision. But when the control is transferred to a Managing Agency firm, one man is put in charge of the business, who makes decisions immediately and on the spot. There was talk in Madura during the war of building a new spinning-mill to compete with that managed by Messrs. Harvey & Co. Mr. Harvey was asked what he thought of the project; he said that he was delighted at the idea, the bigger the mill and the better it was equipped, the better he would be pleased, as the proprietors would very soon come to him and beg him to take it over. The Madura project fell through, but some recently built Indian mills at Coimbatore soon afterwards justified Mr. Harvey's prediction after running a year or two on their own, by arranging for a Madras firm to come in as managing agents.

So much for the competitive advantages and merits of the Agency system. In order that they should not be outweighed by possible defects it is necessary that the personnel of the Agency firms shall be technically competent and actuated by a high sense of honour. In these respects the European firms of Calcutta and Madras have a definite superiority to the Parsi and Indian firms of Bombay; in competence, because with them succession is by co-option and promotion from the ranks, the ablest of their employees recruited in Great Britain being admitted into partnership, whereas in native firms succession is by inheritance, and pioneers' sons who inherited fortunes were commonly inferior to

their fathers in ability and industry; and in standards of conduct, because the first and greatest of the commandments instilled into the British newcomer in India is, "Thou shalt not let down the European," and the words, "You are an Englishman, I can trust you," come repeatedly to his ear. In all business relationships our standard is the higher. A Bombay student, to whom I will give the impossible name of Ramabhowy, talking about a relative of the same name, said to me, "He was a very good Ramabhowy, he found jobs for about a hundred of us; but he was not a very good man, he decamped with a lakh of rupees." Where nepotism is regarded with approval rather than otherwise, it is natural that it should prevail.

Before I left India, the Agency system was more and more severely criticized in Bombay, and the feeling against it came to a climax when the Tariff Board was enquiring into the claim put forward by the Bombay mill-owners for increased protective duties on imported cotton goods, manufacturers elsewhere being only lukewarm in their support of the demand. It was alleged that the difficulties in Bombay were largely due to the malpractices of the managing agents, to the secret illicit commissions they were alleged to secure, their methods of dealing with the liquid capital employed, their alleged habit of speculating in the purchase of raw cotton, and putting the transaction to their own account when it was profitable, and to that of the mills when it was not, and so on. The Board in its report pronounced formal verdicts of not guilty on each of these charges, but added recommendations that the Agency firms should abstain in future from these practices of which they were not guilty.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TATA IRON AND STEEL COMPANY, AND THE MADRAS COTTON-MILLS

FROM Calcutta I went to Midnapore, the junction of the two trunk lines to Bombay and Madras, thence by a slow train to the wayside station on the Bengal-Nagpur line of Kalimati, finally arriving in the evening at the place then called Sakchi, since re-named Jamshedpur, three miles from Kalimati, the site of the works of the Tata Iron and Steel Company, in the Company's omnibus, and was admitted to the Company's travellers' bungalow. On the following morning I was given the services of a Syrian Christian from Travancore as a guide, and in the afternoon and evening continued my inspection with the help of a young Parsi from Bombay.

The history of the Company is so well known that the briefest summary is all that is needed here. Jamsetji Tata, when he had made a great fortune and a greater reputation in cotton manufacture, set himself three further tasks, to create an effective Institute for technological training, to exploit the water power of the Western Ghats by hydro-electricity, and to restore the ancient fame of India for iron and steel production. In each of these efforts he was able to advance up to a point, but had to leave it an incompletely completed project to his sons, Dorabji and Ratan. In the matter of steel, he enlisted the services of an American expert, and with him spent much time and money in futile investigations into deposits of iron ore, till chance led them to consult the scientists who made the Geological Survey of India, who drew their attention to the enormously rich and ample deposits now being exploited by the Company. After Jamsetji's death, his sons successfully floated the company with Indian capital, London financiers having declined to come in, and at Sakchi they found a site combining all the most important requisites, a healthy situation, a sufficient water supply, cheap land, and a centre to which the necessary coal, ore and flux could be transported at minimum cost. As these also are purchased at very low prices, it is not surprising to learn that the total cost of obtaining all the material for the

production of a ton of pig assembled at the works is very much lower than in any other important centre of steel production. Actual production of steel began in 1911. From the beginning the Indian Railway Board came forward as a large purchaser of rails and other material. The ore, 60 per cent pure iron, is simply tunnelled out of the hillside, and some of the coal comes from seams 20 feet thick.

In the beginning the Company relied mainly on German metallurgists for technical instruction and supervision, but when the war broke out they were interned and British subjects and Americans were recruited to take their places. But the consequent extra expense and possible loss of efficiency was much more than counterbalanced by the pressure of the war demand. In January 1918, the time of my visit, every steel rail that the Company could turn out, with the forges working continuously day and night, if it passed the Government tests, was bought for the War Office at a very remunerative price, though at only a fraction of that charged by British steelmakers; and all the rails that the Government rejected were sold in the open market at a much higher price.

Naturally, the directing staff was in high feather, and enthusiastic young Parsis in the office were full of the scheme of "The Greater Extension," to cost a million sterling, then being planned, while the work of providing bungalows for the salaried workers, housing for the rank and file, clubs and other appropriate amenities for different classes, was being pushed on steadily. For the main operations the workers were organized in six four-hour shifts, each man working one shift of four hours, then having four hours off, then a second shift followed by twelve hours rest. The workers assembled came from many parts of India, far and near; many from the jungles of Orissa. In the carpenters' shops all the skilled workers were Chinese, paid two rupees per day, their unskilled assistants, Indians, paid one rupee per day. Taking the works as a whole, I was told that every European nation was represented among the employees, except France. I met English, Scots, Irish, Americans and Dutch.

The intention, however, was to replace Europeans by Indians as rapidly as this could be done without pecuniary loss. I was shown one striking example of such replacement carried out with

great profit. One of the most delicate operations in the production of steel rails is the final straightening, which is accomplished by passing them through two sets of rollers by which the necessary pressure to correct any curvature is applied simultaneously in horizontal and perpendicular directions. The extent and direction of the curvature was detected by the eye alone by one man, who also had to estimate the amount of pressure necessary to correct it, and he signalled with his hands to the assistants who controlled the rollers. Originally this work was entrusted to Yorkshiremen, who demanded high wages and short hours of labour, to which the firm did not greatly object; but they also refused to exceed a certain daily stint of output, which the firm considered intolerably small. They had been discharged and the men whom I saw doing this highly skilled work were Santals from the jungle, paid ten annas per day. They, as I was told, had been found to have an extraordinary aptitude for this work, and did it quite as well as the English experts, and had no objection to turning out as many straightened rails per day as they could.

The high profits made by the Tata Iron and Steel Company during the war were enhanced during the brief post-war boom of prices, during which it hurried forward its planned "Greater Extensions." But these proved unfortunate in that the machinery ordered in America during the boom at fancy prices only arrived when the subsequent slump had begun, and it became clear that the Tata reserves were insufficient, and that steel production would cease in India unless the Government came to the help of the Company. From a purely commercial point of view, it would probably have paid best for the Government to have refused to help, in which case the Company would presumably have confined its operations to iron production, for which it had unrivalled advantages. But this would have created great resentment throughout India, since to most Indians it seemed that their national prestige was bound up with the fortunes of T.I.S.C.O.; and after the great services rendered by the firm during the war, to fail to help afterwards would have been considered shabby desertion. Accordingly ever since "Tisco" has been nursed by the Government of India like a sick but precious child, and fed liberally on tariffs and quotas, while repeated examinations into its conditions and prospects have shown somewhat unsatisfactory results.

Meanwhile this peculiar Indian characteristic remains. "Tisco" has its shareholders of various orders, first and second preference, ordinary and deferred, and its Board of Directors, but the management was vested in the firm of Messrs. Tata Sons & Co., Ltd., already previously merchants and managing agents of cotton-mills, cement and other works, and shortly about to launch out as promoters and managers of an Industrial Bank to operate all over India, thereby creating a speculative mania resembling our own South Sea Bubble of two centuries before. At one time I was rude enough to ask the reason of this arrangement, and what good purpose it could serve, and whether "Tisco" was not an enterprise important enough to have its own management; whether, indeed, it would not have succeeded better if it had, seeing what great advantages it had in access to cheap, abundant and excellent supplies of raw material, and very cheap labour.

Madras Cotton-mills

Before leaving the subject of the Managing Agency system one other instance of the very varied ways in which it may work seems to deserve attention. The two big cotton-mills of Madras, "Buckingham" and "Carnatic," founded in the seventies, with Indians and Europeans in equal numbers as Directors, had from the beginning been managed by Messrs. Binny and Company. The actual manager of both, *in my time*, was Sir Clement Simpson. For many years in succession Messrs. Binny & Co., as a matter of policy, regularly paid the mill shareholders 10 per cent dividends, neither more nor less, without fail; but it was becoming increasingly difficult to dispose of the surplus profits which were coming in beyond the amount so absorbed. Bonus shares had been issued from time to time, and the solid assets, land, buildings, stocks, etc., were written down till their book value was only a minute fraction of what they were really worth on any possible method of computation. At last the effort to maintain the 10 per cent dividend was given up, and 20 per cent substituted, and that, in turn, was maintained regularly for a succession of years, in fact until the recent world slump. In a word, Binny & Co., while treating the shareholders fairly, and even generously, also tried to teach them not to be greedy, but to accept what was given them

with grateful and contented hearts; and it can be seen that thereby they acquired a greater amount of freedom to manage the mill finances as they thought right.

They professed the strictest code of capitalistic ethics. Everything that they did, according to their own statements, was done for the sake of attaining maximum profits on capital. I repeatedly visited one mill or the other with parties of students, and compared it with the Choolai mill near by under Indian management, and had doubts about the unmixed character of their motives. From what I saw, I felt sure that Sir Clement Simpson was an artist at heart, that he aimed at having the finest and most creditable mills in Asia, a delight to his own eyes and a source of justifiable pride to his firm. Visitors to the mills were shown first the canteens for operatives of different castes on the opposite side of the road, along which the finest Ongole bulls dragged the bales of raw cotton from the railway with slow and stately march, then were taken round and shown each process in turn, from the first opening of the bales to the baling of the finished cloth, bleached or dyed, ready for the tailor, workshops and machines all arranged in series so that the passage of the material from each one to the next was as short and easy as possible. Almost all were on the ground floor, all light and airy, and remarkably cool in the hottest weather. The one process in which the conditions seemed prejudicial to health was the mixing of the cotton when the bales were opened; in that room the air was charged with fluff, but there were very few workers engaged in it. Those of my students who happened to go with me barefooted commented on the remarkable cleanliness of the floors. Women were employed as cleaners only, all the textile operatives were men or boys.

Behind the mills there were large and pleasant compounds to be shown, one containing bungalows and club-houses for the staff, the other schools for children of operatives and half-timers, in which they were taught reading, writing and arithmetic, English, and the principles of spinning and weaving, under the supervision of two English Kindergarten teachers, which travelled visitors declared to be the best elementary schools in India, and certainly the scholars seemed to be having a very good time. Finally, after 1920, there was a new housing estate to be seen, on which "coolie lines" were being built, in some respects like

those of the Calcutta jute-mills, but interspersed with grass and trees, so that the general effect was pleasant and cheerful.

All this, according to Messrs. Binny & Co.'s protestations, was done because it paid. I doubt whether, if challenged, they could have shown that a single extra yard of cloth was sold in consequence, or that there was any appreciable pecuniary gain in any direction to set against the very considerable expenditure out of capital and income on this "welfare work."

The policy with regard to wages was to pay half an anna per day more than the amount necessary to attract all the workers wanted. The majority of them came from the villages, and the particular direction in which their unsatisfied desires were keenest was for longer and more frequent visits to their native places; hence higher rates of wages increased absenteeism, the constant bugbear of manufacturing employers in India. Ways were found, however, for supplementing the regular wage without upsetting the mill routine, by bonuses for regular attendance and good work, retirement allowances and rewards for long service, which boons were denounced by the first trade union pioneers who agitated in Madras as golden fetters for the wage slaves.

I shall have more to say later about the rise of trade unionism in Madras.

CHAPTER XXII

PEASANTS IN GANJAM AND THE GODAVARI DELTA

AFTER Sakchi, my next halt was to pay a visit to Mr. (Sir) A. P. Patro at Berhampur, the chief town in Ganjam, the most northerly District of Madras Presidency. He later became the Minister for Education for Madras, but at that time his occupation was what in England we should describe as that of a family solicitor with an extensive practice, the country round Berhampur being a mixture of zemindari and ryotwari villages, and while he earned his living by giving legal advice to zemindars, he occupied his leisure by talking to villagers, and advising them to keep away from law-courts, and to abstain from employing Brahmin priests. He was also the Chairman of Berhampur Municipality.

Soon after my arrival in Madras he had contributed a series of articles to the *Hindu* newspaper on the economic conditions of the Ganjam peasantry, containing a number of family budgets drawn up on the Leplay method, giving particulars of numbers, sexes and ages of family members, earning and expenditure, possessions, including clothing, jewellery, tools and utensils, as well as land, if there were any.

Since of recent years statements made in good faith have been widely circulated in England to the effect that a very large proportion—sometimes stated at three-quarters, or even more—of Indian workers get only one meal a day, it seems worth while to give the general result of Patro's enquiries into these poor Ganjam agricultural workers. First, I may remark, that when I was told in Madras that hosts of peasants got only one meal a day, I asked whether they could possibly live and work on such short commons. The answer was, "Oh, I don't mean to say that they do not eat at other times." "One meal" must be taken to mean "one hot sit-down meal." In Ganjam this consisted of boiled rice and ragi porridge, ragi being a millet which looks much like oats when growing, and is very similar to oats in chemical composition and dietetic value. This hot meal was taken in the

evening, after the day's work was over, and what remained was eaten cold for breakfast next morning, and as a midday lunch if there were still something left.

A noticeable feature about the lists of family assets was the general inclusion of gold ornaments in very scanty possessions. Thus in one case the man, an agricultural worker, did not possess a single agricultural implement, not even the universal *mamoti*, the short-handled, broad-bladed hoe, which serves also as spade, shovel, fork, rake and trowel, but his wife had a gold nose-ring.

I had challenged the accuracy of one of Patro's budgets, and this had led to a correspondence and an invitation from him to stop at Berhampur when I got an opportunity, and visit villages with him.

Our first visit was to a zemindari village, the zemindar being an absentee who appeared never to have done anything for the benefit of the village or the villagers, but who exacted half the produce of some crops and more than half of others for rent, and who sent his representative to see the harvesting and the measurement of the grain and carry away his share before the villagers were allowed to touch theirs. The zemindari villages of Ganjam, Patro remarked, were much more poverty-stricken than ryotwari ones, in which the State was the landlord. On arrival we were surrounded by a lean, ragged swarm of men, women and children, very cheerful and friendly; and then I was introduced to the village herdsman, and the herd of cattle of which he had charge. I said, and truly, that it was the most miserable assembly of beasts I had ever seen; in reply, he poured out a torrent of words with much gesticulation, the purport of which, Patro told me, was that it was true the cattle were miserable specimens, but that it was not his fault; he could not do better as long as the villagers were so stingy in allowing him to buy only miserable, feeble little bulls. Give him a good bull, and he would show a very different herd. His neighbours laughed sceptically, and I doubted whether the offspring of a big bull would have fared better on the village's poor and over-stocked pastures.

I heard afterwards of one zemindar in the Ganjam District who busied himself in the improvement of the local breed of buffaloes, but zemindars who are not pure parasites are rare birds.

Our next visit was to a ryotwari village, in which the threshing

of corn by the hoofs of oxen was going on, under the supervision of an old friend of Patro's who had gone against his advice to keep out of the law-courts. At the division of the family property he had been discontented with the four acres allotted to him, and had taken the case to the courts. In the final decision he was awarded six acres, but to satisfy the *vakils* he had to sell four, and was left with only two.

The district round Berhampur is moderately hilly, and dependent on the monsoon rains, which, however, very rarely fail. But it suffers in an extreme degree from two evils which were then, and have been since, much discussed; excessive subdivision and fragmentation.

According to Hindu law, landed property is divided, on the death of the holder, equally among his sons. They may, if they choose, cultivate it jointly, in which case they are entitled to equal shares of the produce; or they may divide the land, and each cultivate his own share separately; or one son may take over the whole, and pay a money rent to his brothers for the use of their shares, so that they can seek for other employment elsewhere. In most cases there is an actual division, sooner or later, with the result that in healthy families with increasing numbers the holdings become too small to provide anyone with a living. That is "excessive subdivision."

"Fragmentation" is a further complication, due to the fact that if a holding consists, as it generally does, of several different plots of land, with various advantages of fertility, proximity to the village and access to irrigation water, each son will on division usually demand his equal share of each plot, so that unduly small holdings are made still more uneconomic by being split up into a number of tiny fragments. We saw the slope of a low hill laid out for paddy cultivation, each separate plot levelled and surrounded by earth banks to retain the monsoon rains, some of them so small that even the minute ploughs in use could not work in them, and they were left uncultivated.

It is much easier to recognize the evils of excessive subdivision and fragmentation than to suggest practicable remedies. Where there is fragmentation, but the subdivision had not been excessive, it has been found possible in some places, notably in the Panjab Canal Colonies, to induce all the landholders in a village to agree

to the re-division of the holdings so that each man gets his in one compact plot. This is, of course, specially applicable where all the land is of similar quality; and it does not help much where the trouble is that the holdings, however conveniently compact, are too small.

The subject was raised by Professor Jevons at the first meeting after my arrival in Madras of the Indian Board of Agriculture, which is a biennial conference of agricultural authorities, and in consequence a circular was sent to the provincial governments asking their opinions on the question whether legislation should be passed to provide that when a holding fell below a certain area it should cease to be further subdivided, and be inherited by the eldest son to the exclusion of the younger ones. I was one of the people asked by the Madras Government to express an opinion. I deprecated the project as dangerous, and likely to be contrary to Indian sentiment and sense of fairness, and suggested that the better course would be to push forward elementary and technical education to enable lads to fit themselves for other occupations if they were too thick on the land. I saw the other answers sent in; nearly all were adverse to the proposal. The most striking one was from a district officer who said that when he got the questionnaire he went out and found the eldest son of a ryot and asked him what he thought of a law that would cause him to inherit the whole holding. He replied, "And be murdered by my brothers? No, thank you!"

My next stop was at Rajahmundry, as the guest of Mr. O. Couldry, of the Indian Education Service, the Principal of the Arts College. Rajahmundry is on the Godavari river, at the head of the delta which was converted by Cotton's greatest irrigation scheme into the most prosperous area in the Madras Presidency. I had hoped for a water excursion through some of its many miles of navigable irrigation canals, to compare the scenes there with those on the west coast, but I found it was a more complicated matter to arrange than I had supposed. The trip was done in houseboats, towed by gangs of coolies, each of which worked from one lock to the next; their services had to be requisitioned by telephone from lock to lock. Moreover my time was getting short, so I abandoned the idea.

Cotton's original work, by which about 800,000 acres had been

irrigated, had been further developed and perfected from time to time, so that now an area of about a million acres has a regulated supply of irrigated water. I got some interesting information on the effect of the steady expansion of the productive capacity of the land upon the rural workers from the manager of the local branch of the Madras Bank. He told me that the water was distributed over different divisions of the delta successively, so that the sowing and harvesting operations in adjoining areas were not simultaneous, and the seasons of maximum demand for labour were longer than in the deltas of the Tamil country, and harvester, when they had finished work in one village, moved on to another. They were also paid at higher rates than farther south, and worked more expeditiously. Instead of squatting on the ground, in the manner I have described as practised in Eruvelliipet, they walked through the fields stooping, and cut off the ears of grain with their sickles in the fashion familiar to us through pictures of reaping in England in the days before machinery. If I remember rightly, he said that four women would cut an acre a day, and received daily wages at about double the rate paid south of Madras.

The two colleges in Rajahmundry were both in session; I lectured one evening in the Arts College, at Couldrey's request, and the next evening at the Training College, at the request of the students.

The former is one of the very few lectures I gave to college students of which I remember something, as a remark of Couldrey's fixed it in my mind. My subject was "Indian Cows and Corn." My usual aim in lecturing was to tell my hearers what they themselves did know, but in such a manner as to make them see familiar facts in a new light. So on this occasion I told how as a child being taken for a holiday to a farm-house in Devonshire, I had waked one morning in June, while the household was asleep, and going to the window had seen the sun well up, and on the opposite hillside a field with cows grazing on richly green grass, and had cried out to them "Ky, ky, ky," and all the cows, with full udders, had come walking down to the gate, eager to be milked. I contrasted that with the poor Indian cow, who yields her poor supply to the milker only if she is deluded into believing that it is her calf, tethered to her foreleg, which is sucking, and who pathetically licks its hindquarters meanwhile.

After dinner, as we sat out on Couldrey's veranda stretched out on long chairs, and enjoying a dessert of the big luscious Godavari bananas, coloured like Ribston pippins, Couldrey commended that passage as a bit of vivid description, and went on to talk about a picture in his mind's eye, seen in the ploughing season from that veranda, of oxen coming home in the evening, carrying the ploughs suspended from the yokes, as Vergil two thousand years before described in the *Ecllogues*, a passage which, he said, he never realized till he came to India.

Next morning I saw something of Rajahmundry, in which the most active trade appeared to be that of the potters, though I saw also a silk-weaving mill, and what is an abomination to me, a rice-mill, in which good grain is converted into food deficient in vitamins.

I have heard much from Professor Ranga about the neighbouring District of Guntur, which became, by his account, the hub of Madras politics. The economic conditions of Guntur are similar to those of the Godavari; the greater part of the district is in the Kistna Delta, irrigated by the second of Cotton's great schemes. The higher standard of wages which is possible there also allows for a higher standard of general culture, and in Guntur there were men of imagination and initiative who supplied the necessary impulse. They organized a movement for establishing village libraries, and fostered dramatic entertainments and encouraged wandering reciters of old Hindu poems and tales, and initiated a movement for the uplift of the depressed castes.

The quickening of general intelligence and interest in matters outside the daily struggle for a meagre living which came from such beginnings made the peasantry of Guntur responsive to waves of political enthusiasm when constitutional changes came, as will be shown below.

CHAPTER XXXI

MYSORE STATE

FOR a pleasant and healthy climate I doubt if any other part of India equals Mysore. An undulating tableland with an average elevation of about 3,000 feet, nearly equally distant from the sea on east and west, it gets the benefit of both monsoons, which together give a moderate but exceptionally well-distributed rainfall of fair certainty. March is reckoned the hottest month of the year, but even then the heat is not intolerable. As Mysore also possesses the only gold mines in India worth consideration, it is a fact that might be noted by those who regard the British Empire in India as a monument of acquisitive greed, that this desirable territory of an area more than half of that of England and Wales, conquered by the East India Company's forces in 1799, and under direct British administration from 1831 to 1867, is to-day governed by its own Maharajah of ancient lineage, entirely free in all its internal affairs as long as it makes a definite small contribution to the expense of general defence, and no outrageous misgovernment forces the Viceroy to interfere.

One afternoon when my wife and I were being shown Akbar's abandoned capital of Fatehpur Sikri, our guide, who claimed to be a lineal descendant of one of Akbar's Persian secretaries, summed up the record of the Mogul emperors thus—"Baber, the great Conqueror; Akbar, the great Ruler; Shah Jehan, the great Builder; Aurangzebe, the great Destroyer." The empire which Baber founded seemed to have been solidly established by Akbar, Queen Elizabeth's contemporary, during his fifty years of rule, on the basis of Hindu-Moslem co-operation and mutual tolerance, combined with higher standards of equity, efficiency of administration, and moderation and certainty in taxation. In the seventeenth century these standards were relaxed; increasing corruption and excessive taxation impoverished the empire while it still seemed at the height of its power and magnificence; and, finally, Aurangzebe's fanatical Mohammedanism generated the equally fanatical and more savage Hinduism of the Mahrattas. Aurangzebe died in 1707, and the Mogul Empire collapsed.

In the midst of the century of confusion that followed, Hyder Ali, a military adventurer, seized upon the highlands of Mysore, and there established a Mahomedan State over a peaceful Hindu population, by means of a mixed force of Hindus and Moslems, recruited by broken and restless men drawn to his standard by the hope of booty. His raids on the Madras territory compelled the East India Company to go to war, but with scant success, and struggles with the Mahrattas forced it to patch up peace. Hyder was succeeded by his son, Tippu Sahib, a fanatical Mahomedan, "The Tiger of Mysore," whose sanguinary excursions had for their object forcible conversions of Hindus and Indian Christians as well as booty. During the Revolutionary wars he was the ally of France. At last an overwhelming force was marched against him; his fortified capital of Seringapatam was stormed, and he himself killed sword in hand.

The Company then sought for a new ruler among the descendants of the old Maharajahs, and put a boy aged five on the throne, appointing officers to administer the country during his minority. But the misguided youth when he came of age dissipated the funds that had been accumulated for him, let the administration fall into chaos, and squeezed the taxpayers beyond the limits of effective exaction, driving his subjects into rebellion. In 1831 the Company deposed him and again took over the administration, a change that was welcomed by the Mysorians. Finally, in 1867, the Viceroy's Government resolved on making a second attempt to confer self-government on Mysore, and to restore the old line. It proceeded gradually and cautiously, and now the effort is an acknowledged success. The Maharajah's government is in accordance with Indian ideas of what government should be, and the people of Mysore are patriotically but reasonably proud of their State, and of what it has done and is doing.

Dasehra in Mysore City

Mysore is conveniently reached from Madras, and on different occasions I visited its chief towns, Bangalore, Mysore City, and the Kolar Gold Fields.

The most interesting visit was that to Mysore City at the time of the great Dasehra Festival in, I think, September or October 1919, but I have no note of the date and cannot trust my memory.

I went at the invitation of the Diwan, Sir M. Visvesvaraya; he was as keen on the development of natural resources and industrialization as the Soviet Government, and had anticipated them in drawing up a Five Years' Plan of progressive increase of production. As a preliminary he collected a mass of statistics, and asked me to study them, deducing what inferences I could, and to advise on the conduct of the statistical work to be done in connection with the general scheme; also to give a lecture on the handling of statistics at the Industrial Exhibition to be held at the next Dasehra Festival.

I was quite willing to do what I could, though I could make little out of the mass of print sent to me, and I had great doubts as to whether any reliance could be put on the statements of present-day production in this village or that, still more whether the anticipated increases in subsequent years were any more than pious hopes. I returned the papers, but promised to give the lecture asked for, and hoped to have a talk with the Diwan and give some possibly useful advice if he had an open mind for its reception. But shortly before the date Visvesvaraya ceased to be Diwan and was succeeded by Sir Albion Banerji.

I gave my lecture as arranged under his auspices, and he took the chair. I spoke generally about the value of economic statistics accurately recorded, and then went on to emphasize my special point, that the whole value of any official collection of statistical matter depended on the reliability of the reports sent in by the actual recorders of individual facts. If the figures in those reports were filled in at random, or with the object of saying what will please, no elaborate mathematical playing about with the figures would yield trustworthy results. By way of illustration I said that the Madras Government, being anxious that the University students in the city should be living under proper conditions, in sending out its usual form to the Principals of the Colleges asking for statistics of membership, attendances, etc., had recently put in a special question asking how many of the students were living in hostels maintained by the College or inspected by the College authorities. The Principal of the Law College handed over his form to his Chief Clerk to be filled in, and as he read over the return before signing it, he exclaimed, "What's this? You say there are 571 of our students living in hostels we maintain or

inspect. Don't you know that as our students are graduates before they enter on the law course we neither maintain nor inspect any hostels?" The Chief Clerk answered, "Of course, sir, I know that perfectly well; but the Government will be much better pleased if we put in a good large number, so I thought it best to put one in." And he was much aggrieved when the Principal struck it out. I concluded, "Of course that sort of thing does not happen in Mysore," and sat down.

In the discussion that followed one man got up and capped my story. In Mysore, he said, the Government gave leases on very easy terms to applicants desirous of taking up unproductive land in order to make some profitable use of it, but had to be satisfied that it was unproductive. He recently had applied for such a lease of a certain piece of waste land, but was informed that he could not have it, as there were a thousand palmyra trees growing on it. Actually there was not a single one, but the local headman who filled up the form for official use, thinking that the Government would be better pleased the more trees it was told there were, had put down a thousand.

When Sir Albion drove me back to lunch, I found that he was delighted with my lecture. It was natural that he should think that Visvesvaraya's optimistic calculations were delusive, and that any possible achievements during his own administration would seem disappointingly small if Visvesvaraya's forecasts were taken as the standard by which to measure them. I heard no more of the Five-Year Plan, and was not asked to give any further consideration to Mysore statistics.

I paid a visit, however, to Dr. Coleman, the Director of Agriculture, a Canadian, and had a long talk with him on the problems of his department. He complained that all Mysore officialdom was obsessed with the idea of industrial development as opposed to agricultural progress, and did not realize that a 5 per cent increase in the agricultural out-turn meant a greater increment in the wealth of the State than a 50 per cent increase in that of the manufacturing industries that they were so keen on fostering.

His plan for the attainment of at least that 5 per cent increase of agricultural out-turn was by the improvement of the country plough. In order to secure adoption by the peasants the new plough had to be very cheap, very simple and fool-proof, very easily kept

in order by the ordinary villager, and very light in draught—in other words it must have all the merits of the traditional plough. He showed me the final result of his experiments in construction, which he believed was capable of solving the problem. With the above merits, it was still powerful enough to break into the surface of the soil when hard and dry. Armed with it, the ryot could do a first ploughing before the rains came, instead of waiting for the rain to soften the soil; and then when the rain came it would begin to soak into the earth immediately, instead of running off and being largely lost. The advantage of such early breaking up of the soil is so well recognized by the Indian cultivator that in some places the work is done with crowbars, native ploughs drawn by native oxen not being capable of making any impression on the hard surface.

My special task having been done, I was free to observe the celebration of the Daschra, which in theory lasts nine days, actually eight, during which the Maharajah ceases to be a mere earthly monarch and becomes also a god. In this period of two-fold majesty, being a god, he must on no account be touched by human hands, and therefore no one may wash or shave him; and being also still the Maharajah, he must not condescend to wash or shave himself. Across a little valley there is, opposite the city of Mysore, a steep hill crowned by a temple where dwells the divine ancestress of the Maharajahs. Daschra begins, unless my memory betrays me, by a pilgrimage of the Maharajah to this temple, in which he interviews his hundreds-of-times great grandmother, and has godhead conferred upon him. The ascent is by a long stairway, and when dusk came I could see this lit up by lights which during the festival were kept burning all night. There was also another approach by a circuitous road, and Mr. Mackintosh, of the staff of the Maharajah's College, one of the two constituent colleges of the newly established Mysore University, took me riding pillion up it on his motor-bicycle. There were places where the road was too steep for the bicycle to carry us both, but when I jumped off it went on, and we achieved the ascent. But what was to be seen at the top I cannot remember, so probably it was not very interesting.

The festival works up to its crisis on the last day. Then at noon we all went in the midst of a vast crowd to a large field some

few miles out in which the central space was kept clear for a review of the whole army, two thousand odd in strength. In due course the Maharajah and the Royal Family and Court and state elephants arrived, and the monarch retired into a tent to await the moment when divinity would leave him. Then he was bathed and washed, and shaved with the completeness of Indian custom in that respect, clothed in his military uniform, and held his review until sunset. Then came the march back by torchlight to the royal palace.

At night the select few of the Mysorian magnates and the guests of the State were invited to the reception which ended the proceedings. We arrived, were conducted upstairs to a waiting-room suitable for a ballroom, inasmuch as it was large, with a fine floor, but had no seats; it gave on to a balcony above an inner courtyard, along which rows of seats were arranged, with a rather modest throne in the middle and two special seats beside it, for the Maharajah, for his heir and destined successor the Yuvarajah, and for the British Resident. They came and took their seats. We were directed to file past them, bowing first to the Maharajah, then, but not quite so low, to the Yuvarajah, and lastly we might, if we chose, also bow to the Resident, though that was not necessary, and then take our seats for the entertainment to be given in the courtyard.

The Maharajah was a gorgeous sight. His whole person, nose, ears, neck, chest, fingers, wrists, arms, and I doubt not toes and ankles also, were encrusted with great diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls set in gold; and the Yuvarajah was not much less sumptuously attired. For all these gems have magical virtue, and it is the most essential duty of an Indian monarch to wear them, in order that such virtue, passing through his body which is the magical symbol of the entirety of his people, may give the land fertility and prosperity, glory and peace.

As I stood before this mass of superstitious splendour my soul revolted a little at bowing to it. It was bowing down in the House of Rimmon. But if one did not bow there one had no right to enter. So I duly bowed to Maharajah and Yuvarajah, and then relieved my feelings by bowing equally low to the Resident, as the symbol, charged with its own magic, of Western civilization, of which we were prouder in those days than now. The enter-

tainment was musical drill by the cavalry, very pretty, and interesting no doubt to those who care for such things.

Dasehra is the time at which custom commonly requires masters to give presents of clothing to their servants, and for other people also it is a special time for buying new clothes; and thereby hangs a tale told me in Madras of Mysore enterprise. A trader set up shop in Bangalore, which can be served with equal convenience from Madras and Bombay, and entered into business relations with a wholesale firm in each city. For a considerable time he settled accounts with both promptly and accurately, so that they formed a high opinion of his reliability. When the 1920 Dasehra was approaching he sent very large orders of equal value to each, and the orders were filled on the usual credit terms. Now in India, a common way of making remittances is to cut rupee notes in half, and send first one set of halves by post, and when they are acknowledged, the other halves. This particular trader got the notes necessary to pay either wholesale firm, cut them in half, sent one set of halves to Madras and the other to Bombay, got acknowledgments, and waited. Shortly afterwards there came enquiries from each wholesale firm as to when its second set of half notes would come. He answered that they had been duly despatched and he had been wondering why they had not been acknowledged, and was making enquiries at the Bangalore post office. Next day he wrote again advising each firm that owing to some mistake its packet had been held up in the post office, and asking it to send back the bundle of half notes which it had received, so that he could satisfy the post office by putting the halves together that it was entitled to receive both sets. This the Madras and Bombay firms both did, but they heard no more from the retailer. When they made enquiries they found that he had sold out at Dasehra and had left Bangalore soon afterwards, nobody knowing where he went, with, of course, the bisected notes pasted together in his pocket.

When I visited the poorer and more crowded parts of the city I saw something in perfect harmony with the Maharajah's magical services, ox wagons rumbling through the streets of which the wheels were solid blocks of wood. But in vivid contrast, I also strolled in a pleasant park, with electric lights on the tops of granite lamp posts, supporting climbing roses and other brilliant

flowers—for the whole city is lit by electricity, the power being derived from the falls of the Cauvery, which supplies electricity also to Bangalore and the Kolar Gold Fields. Then, as a symbol of an intermediate stage between the India of spokeless wheels and the India of the incandescent electric lamp, palaces for the junior royalties were being built on the hills around, since these ornaments of the State were drawing their share of its expanding revenues.

Bangalore

Bangalore stands at an elevation of 3,500 feet. With a population of about 350,000 it is much the biggest town in South India after Madras. When the political relationship between the Indian Empire and Mysore State was settled, and Tippu Sahib's capital of Seringapatam handed back to the Maharajah, an adequate area of land was ceded to form a "cantonment," i.e. a station for the army, and rather more than half the population lives within the cantonment area. A month or two before the armistice I was asked to go there and give an address, at the lecture-room of the Soldiers' Institute, to those of the British troops stationed there who chose to turn up to listen. I had a fair gathering, and gave them my lecture on "Indian Cows and Corn," and another on the political position and the projects of constitutional change. There were a good many Lancashire men among those on the station, among them an old Ruskin College student of mine, who took me to see another who was in hospital from some small accident. They told me that their regiment had been shipped about from place to place for unexplained reasons, that they had not been in action, but supposed that their manœuvres were designed to impress Asiatics with a sense of the might of Britain, but they greatly feared that a comparison between Lancashire and native physique would not have the psychological effect desired. They had no complaint to make, they had seen more of the world than they had ever expected, the food and lodging had been good enough, and the route marching and physical jerks had made them feel splendidly well. But of course they had had no real contact with the people of the countries they had visited.

Bangalore is the site of the Tata Institute for scientific research. I had met Drs. Hay and Sudborough, two of its departmental

heads, in Kodaikalai. The Institute stands at the top of a hill with wide views, the laboratories arranged in separate buildings spaced out, with the residences of the staff, in ample grounds. It was then being maintained by grants from the Government of India and the State of Mysore, supplementing the funds supplied by the Tata family. The chemical department was the most active, having been given definite work to do in connection with the development of Mysore industries, following up the impulse given by Sir Alfred Chatterton. The chief result has been, I believe, the establishment of sandal-wood oil factories. Sandal-wood oil is valued in India as a perfume, and in Europe for medicinal purposes; the tree is a parasite, and its propagation was one of the problems that was perplexing Dr. Coleman.

On the whole I did not feel that the hopes of a great scientific stimulus from this Institute were being justified. The staff seemed to be too cut off from outside intellectual society, the students were a mere handful, and no one seemed to have any clear idea as to the right lines of future development. The thing that interested me most was Mrs. Hay's botanical garden, in which I counted nearly a dozen different sorts of trees producing tree cottons. Tree cotton, known as "kapok," is now extensively used only for stuffing cushions and life-belts, but presumably it was the original spinning material, since the mediaeval description of cotton is "a wool grown on trees finer and whiter than that of sheep," and the sacred thread of the Brahmins, at least in some sections of that great community, must be spun of it.

The Kolar Gold Field

I visited Kolar in October 1918, as the guest of Mr. and Mrs George, both of old Cornish mining families. In fact, apart from one Devon man, all the mining engineers employed on the field seemed to be Cornishmen, forming a very cheerful and harmonious community, over which the representative of the mining firm of John Taylor & Co. presided as *primus inter pares*. Side by side with the Cornishmen there worked another European community, consisting of Italian navvies, who had their own club and social life. They supplied the only example I ever found in India of European labourers competing in manual work on level terms with Indians, and able, by superior strength and skill, to be as

profitable to their employers as Indians receiving very much lower rates of wages.

All the Kolar mines are constructed and worked similarly, so I descended only that of which Mr. George was manager. I have never been down a coal mine, but from descriptions of them I gather that the Mysore gold mines are much more civilized places to work in. A roomy electrical lift took us down to the 3,000-feet level. There was a potential station for the lift at every hundred feet of descent, to serve as intermediate stopping-places for the main stations at the thousand feet levels. The Mysore mine, the biggest and deepest of the group, had reached a depth of 5,000 feet from the surface, 2,000 feet below sea-level.

At each station, level roads, cut through the granitic rock, high and broad enough for men to walk erect, reached out horizontally in search of veins of gold-bearing rock. One such was pointed out to me, but I could see no sign of gold in it. These veins slope up and down steeply, and when found they are attacked from both above and below, and excavated in rough blocks, as large as a man can conveniently handle, brought to the surface, broken into the ordinary size of road metal, and fed to the stamps which crush them to the finest powder, ready to be washed, as a thin watery film, over trays of mercury, which extracts the invisible particles of gold and forms an amalgam with it, the mercury being recovered afterwards.

The bungalows of the engineering staff had doors and windows defended against the entry of mosquitoes, which made netting to defend beds unnecessary. The district round the mines is dry, rocky and barren, not beautiful naturally, and disfigured by the great mounds of powdered granite, but it is exceptionally healthy.

CHAPTER XXIV

A VISIT TO BURMA

IN April 1918 Mark Hunter left Madras to take up the appointment of Director of Education for Burma. Up till then in the matter of higher education Burma had been an annexe of Bengal, though in race, language, religion and traditional culture Burman and Bengali are wide apart; and the chief duty of Rangoon College, the only important college in Burma, was to prepare students for Calcutta University examinations.

The plans for the new university had so far progressed by December 1918 that advisers were summoned to Rangoon to suggest plans for the organization of the several departments, a good many coming from Madras. I was given the task of drawing up the scheme for the Economics Department. My Madras colleagues sailed direct from Madras, there being a boat available, but I could not get away in time, and had to follow the regular route via Calcutta.

I got on board the Rangoon steamer in good time to watch the emigrant coolies pour in, and fill up the decks with their bedding, their persons and their small belongings. We were later than we should have been in starting, and the river was narrowing under the falling tide. The steamer was moored with its bows upstream, and when it started the captain's attempt to turn round failed. We had to back slowly downwards to find a place where the channel was broader; but a second and a third attempt to turn failed, and it was not till after much time had been thus lost, and a fourth attempt had succeeded, that we were able to proceed at a normal rate. In consequence we were too late to cross the bar at that day's high tide; the next was at night, when by the pilotage rules boats may not cross, and so we had to lie up for the night, and made our final departure from Ganges waters a day late.

The course of the river is through swamps already converted into rich cultivated land succeeded by swamps that are undergoing, or destined later to undergo, that change, as the swamp area continually advances into the Bay of Bengal, and is nibbled away



ENTRANCE TO SHWE DAGON, THE PAGODA
SURROUNDING THE PLATEFORM



RANGOON, THE SHWE DAGON, THE PLATEFORM
SURROUNDING THE PAGODA

by the Bengal peasant. Here and there stand jute-mills on the banks, lordly structures in comparison with native dwellings, the coolie lines less conspicuous beside or behind them.

I had just eight days in Burma, and was able to snatch three of them for a trip by rail to Mandalay, since the Sub-Committee with which I had to work gave me my material immediately, and I had time to draft my report, hand it over for the Committee's consideration, make an appointment for our next meeting, and catch a night train with three of my colleagues. At the last moment, on leaving the Rangoon hotel, I found my topee had been stolen from the hat-stand while I was dining. My first task in Mandalay, therefore, was to hire a rickshaw and explore the town for a shop where topees were sold, but this was in vain. Finally, I asked for dealers in umbrellas, and was taken to the dwelling of an old man who made the ingenious native Burmese umbrellas, of oiled silk stretched over bamboo frames, and bought for eleven annas one which is still serviceable.

I had been given the address of a shop in Mandalay kept by an old Burmese lady as the best place in which to buy Burmese silk, and visited it, but it was past its best days and I found better stocks in Rangoon. Burmese silk is (or was, I am afraid it has deteriorated) a very beautiful tissue, then sold at remarkably low prices considering its quality. One lady in Rangoon said to me, "It washes beautifully and never wears out. I make all the children's overalls of it." Whether white or dyed with native dyes it is equally a joy to the eye and touch. But all Burmese textile industries have been devastated since the war by Japanese and other outside competition, and such bargains as were freely offered in 1919 soon after ceased to be procurable.

The two sights of Mandalay are the Golden Palace of the last kings of Burma, and the sacred hill on the outskirts at the foot of which stretches the field of the "Thousand Pagodas." The palace, of carved teak, much gilded, stands in a large square enclosure, which could in its then state be described as a badly kept garden or park, defended by walls and a broad moat. Entry was free, and the little row of native soldiers mounted on beautiful Burmese ponies in front of the entrance were, apparently, there for ornament only. The moat would have been excellent for boat races if local taste had run that way. The ascent of the sacred hill

is by a stone stairway, between low stone walls, the summit, which is a square platform with a shrine and views of the lines of mountains which border the valley.

Travellers who make even a short visit to Burma are advised to make the journey to Mandalay by rail, but to by river. The time at my disposal unfortunately was insufficient. I took a day train back to Rangoon, and so saw something of the intervening country.

Mandalay is a city of Burmans, Rangoon a cosmopolitan port, of which only one-third of the population is Burmese; immigrant labour is employed, mostly Indian, but with some Chinese. Nevertheless it was in Rangoon rather than in Mandalay that the special characteristics of Burmese culture seemed most apparent to the casual eye, and particularly its difference from Indian. Curious little closed cabs ran about the streets, the drivers to a man were Indian, but the ponies that drew them were sleek, lively, well groomed and well fed, doing their work as if they enjoyed it, the greatest possible contrast to the unhappy beasts that drew the Madras "bandies." Somehow or other the native Burman had contrived to impose his own standards in this respect upon the strangers within his land. In the pleasanter parts of Rangoon it was Burmese who thronged the streets, as the immigrant population was massed largely in the neighbourhood of the wharves and rice-mills; and here in the evening one encountered smiling happy faces of men, women and children strolling about, talking and laughing, while in the heat of the day women sat on the ground, puffing the peculiar Burmese cigarette, which is a cylinder about an inch in diameter and about ten inches long, filled with a variety of combustibles including some tobacco; it has to be smoked with care and concentration of mind, for it readily bursts into flame.

Burmese Buddhism, like medieval Catholicism, has its monasteries and nunneries, which, like those, are not highly esteemed for genuine piety. It has also its parish priests, the *Phoongyees*, much loved and reverenced by the people and highly esteemed by European residents, living like Chaucer's "Poor Person of a toun." It is their function to compensate by a superabundance of self-denial in their own persons for the human frailties of their

flocks, and to show the way to Nirvana by example rather than precept. Since they are followers of Buddha, "the enlightened one," they recognize the duty of enlightening others, and maintain village schools for girls equally with boys; in consequence the proportion of literacy is (1921 Census) about four times as high in Burma as in India among males and six times as high among females. Villagers, I was told, loved to display their affection for their priests by feasting them on Huntley & Palmer's biscuits and Nestle's milk. In the matter of marriage Buddhism lays upon men and women no burdens grievous to be borne; lovers marry without let or hindrance according to their own desires, and divorce is equally easy. When the "Reforms" of 1920 were drafted for Burma, there never was any doubt but that women should have the vote on the same terms as men.

The College broke up just after my return to Rangoon, with athletic sports, into which Burmese students enter with much zest, in the afternoon, and a *Pwe*, which is the great national entertainment at night. That form of entertainment lasts from dark to dawn, and is held in the open air by lamplight. The spectators come in family parties and spread their bedding on the ground, and listen, watch or sleep as they feel inclined. I could stop only till twelve o'clock, as I was due to be at the Burmah Oil Company's wharf at six, to go by its steam launch down the river to Syriam, where its refinery is situated. During that time the entertainment was mixed; there were songs, which I was told were intended to be funny and were decidedly indecent, dances by fully clothed and heavily decorated ladies who slowly passed the stage with wavings of arms and swaying of bodies, and two special features. One was the performance in operatic style of a scene from the Ramayana, in which Ravana, the Devil King of Ceylon, persuaded Sita, Rama's bride, to enter his horseless chariot, and flew across the sea with her. The other was something of a sort I have never seen elsewhere. It was called "muscle posing." A Sandow-like man appeared on the stage wearing only a small loin-cloth, and made the muscles of his trunk swell and subside in fantastic fashion, those of the right side moving independently of those on the left, and sometimes all dancing up and down like the keys of a piano beneath the fingers of a pianist.

At Syriam I had a very friendly welcome from the Chief

Chemist, who was at the head of a little research staff of graduates from Indian Universities, of whose ability and work he expressed a high opinion. He was full of the new principle which he had established for oil refining. The ordinary practice was fractional distillation, by which the crude oil was gradually brought to higher temperatures, so that the different constituents were vaporized in the order of their respective volatility, and condensed separately. His method was fractional condensation, a reversal of the process. The crude oil was quickly heated to evaporation-point, and then gradually cooled, so that the different constituents were condensed separately in the reverse order of volatility. The main superiority of this method, he said, was that in the gaseous form the molecules of different substances, moving freely, separated more quickly and perfectly than when the sorting out had to be done by the more volatile, when gaseous, forcing itself out of an enveloping liquid. There were, I think, some subsidiary advantages which I have forgotten.

The researches which were being carried on were, I understood, into the benzines. These, he maintained, would ultimately be found to be the most valuable of all the products of a petroleum refinery, and exploration of their varieties of chemical composition, qualities and possible uses was still in its infancy. I was surprised to hear that just then paraffin wax for making candles was the product which fetched most money, exceeding either kerosene or petrol.

One could hardly leave Rangoon without mention of the Shwe Dagon, which is the great glory of Burma. It stands on an eminence which, though slight in absolute height, lifts it well above the surrounding land, and thence its gold-covered spire rises skywards, exceeding St. Paul's Cathedral in height. Somewhere within its solid masonry there is embedded a relic of Buddha's chief incarnation, that in which he attained enlightenment, one of his toe-nails, I was told, though not on any reliable authority, and also relics of his other incarnations. A platform surrounds the base of the pagoda, around which visitors at the time of my visit were allowed to walk freely. It is faced by a succession of shrines on either hand, on one hand those surrounding the base of the spire, opposite and facing them the other shrines. In these, behind gilded metal railings, are statues several times life-size of

Buddha seated in contemplation. Here, I felt, was a temple in which people of any race or religion could sympathetically come and worship under the open sky, free from blood and incense and magic. A young woman came to pay her homage; she carried a small bunch of flowers, and threw the blooms one at a time to the feet of different Buddhas.

The Shwe Dagon will, I imagine, still point upwards to the sky, and proclaim its silent message to humanity, when the oil wells of Burma are exhausted and the benzine, paraffin and petrol which they supply have done what they were destined to do.

CHAPTER XXV

PUBLIC AFFAIRS IN MADRAS, 1912-1922

Lord Pentland's Administration

When I came to Madras Captain John Sinclair, Lord Pentland, was the Governor, "the best gentleman and by no means the worst brain we ever sent to India," according to an I.C.S. verdict, which would be, I am sure, endorsed by all who knew him in India. Educated at Wellington College and Sandhurst for the army, he served in the 5th Royal Irish Lancers from 1879 to 1887, when he came to the conclusion that he could be of more service as a civilian. He prepared himself for public life by travel, and residence and study in Toynbee Hall, was a hard-working member of the first London County Council, became a pillar of Liberalism in Scotland, and held the office of Secretary for Scotland from January 1906 to January 1912, serving successively under Campbell-Bannerman, Asquith and Lloyd George.

In this office his first aim was to secure effective protection to crofters and other small farmers. In 1906 he introduced a carefully drafted "Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill," which passed through the House of Commons repeatedly, with increasing majorities, but was as repeatedly thrown out by the House of Lords. In 1909 he accepted a peerage from Mr. Asquith to fight for it there, and at last, in 1911, got it passed, needless to say in a weakened form. But in January 1912, when the time came for making the appointments under the Act on which the practical value of the measure largely depended, he fell a victim to the open hostility of Tory territorial magnates and the secret intrigue of Liberal plutocrats, and was turned out of office by Mr. Lloyd George on the plea that the Government was of opinion that the Secretary for Scotland must be in the House of Commons. He was then offered the post of "Governor of Fort St. George," which is the official title of the Governor of Madras.

Suppressing his natural indignation at his political career at home being thus summarily terminated, he accepted this office, and arrived in Madras in October 1912. As private secretary in 1896 to Lord Aberdeen when Governor-General of Canada he

no doubt got an insight into the possibilities of his new office, in which he became the immediate ruler of forty million people. I imagine also that it was a relief to him to be free from the atmosphere of party politics.

Lord Pentland was a true Liberal Imperialist, if we understand true Liberalism to be based upon a belief in the inestimable value of the individual human soul, and on the doctrine that the function of the State is to secure for all its members the best procurable conditions for the full development of personality. He believed that in India Imperial administration should and could be carried on in that spirit; consequently he saw no clash between loyalty to the Empire and whole-hearted efforts to promote the welfare and cultural advance of Indians—on the contrary, the former duty implied the latter. This he made clear, not by words, but by deeds. When I first reached Madras I was interested to observe that the one adjective continually used by Indian speakers to describe his administration was "beneficent."

Madras was governed at the top by a council of four, the Governor himself and three members of his Council, who divided between them the supervision of the various departments. Lord Pentland chose Education as his special province. The great difficulty in securing the sadly needed increase of school and college equipment was finance, in which Madras was cruelly hampered, being allowed to retain for local purposes only an exceptionally small proportion of the revenue raised in the province. The best he could do was to secure an increase in the annual outlay on education from Rs. 1,57,00,000 to Rs. 2,48,00,000.* At this cost he increased the proportion of children of school age receiving elementary education from one-fifth to one-quarter, established a number of secondary schools, multiplied playgrounds, appointed (as observed above) a Director of Physical Training, made a beginning of medical inspection of schools in Madras City, set on foot a "Special Subjects Training Centre" for training teachers in domestic economy, manual occupations, physical exercises and singing. Much also was done for the advance of University education, and Madras owes to him the establishment of Queen Mary's College, the first university college for women in India; it was speedily followed by the Madras Women's Christian

* At the then rate of exchange, from £1,047,000 to £1,653,000.

College, a joint effort of British and American missionary societies. Through the excellent work of these two colleges women's higher education is far more advanced in Madras than in any other Indian province. (After Lord Pentland had left India I suggested to Lord Willingdon that their Principals should be made members of the Senate of the University, and my suggestion was accepted. A third lady, representing Roman Catholic work in the same field, was also nominated at the same time.) In order to cope with the financial difficulty Lord Pentland drafted an Elementary Education Bill, which was passed into law by the Government of India in 1919, the year when he gave up office, by which municipal councils and local boards were authorized to levy special education local taxes for providing and maintaining elementary schools, such funds to be supplemented by equivalent Government grants.

Lord Pentland was equally interested in public health and economic development. From both points of view he was keen on the improvement of milk supply by improvement of the breeds of cattle and contriving schemes for better organization of milk distribution, though in the latter matter little could be effected at the time. The anti-malaria campaign owed much to his organization of the enlisting and training of malaria nurses; he increased the hospital provision for general and maternity work in Government institutions and outside them by giving encouragement and financial help to private efforts. In all these matters, in accordance with the best British precedents, he endeavoured to further his aims by enlisting the goodwill and co-operation of men of British and Indian, Hindu and Moslem communities alike.

He had been less than two years in office when the war broke out. Within a week he started a "Madras War Fund" by voluntary subscriptions, which was mainly spent on equipping and maintaining a hospital ship, the *Madras*, which was the only hospital ship in Eastern waters available for Government use during the first year of the war. He saw that the calamity of the war was also an opportunity for quickening Indian industrial enterprise, and organized the Madras Exhibition of 1915 described above, and a second, bigger one in 1917, each of which yielded a surplus for the War Fund. But soon he was faced with the awkward political problems created by Mrs. Besant's agitation for Indian Home Rule.

Mrs. Besant and the Indian Home Rule Agitation

Mrs. Annie Besant, after she had dropped Secularism for Fabian Socialism, and done much valuable work on the London School Board for education and trade unionism, determined to devote her great abilities to the furtherance of religion, seeking, naturally, a new faith to which to adhere instead of reverting to one of those which she had spent years in deriding. Accordingly she came to Madras, and begged Madame Blavatsky to accept her as a disciple. Madame Blavatsky had supported the claims of Theosophy by the performance of miracles accomplished at Adyar, through the supernatural power of saints living in the remote solitudes of Tibet. These miracles had attained so much fame that the Psychical Research Society sent out an investigator. He reported that they were performed by trickery, explained the *modus operandi*, and secured confessions from Madame Blavatsky's assistants. Madame Blavatsky, doubtless feeling that an adherent who could be choked off by such a revelation would not be of much use to her, handed Mrs. Besant a copy of that report, and asked her to read and consider it before making any decision. She did, and then fell at Mme. Blavatsky's feet and assured her that her veneration for her had only been increased by the perusal.

Madras "European" society, which in home affairs is very conservative, was not inclined any way to be favourably impressed by Mrs. Besant's record as a Secularist and Socialist, and as an early martyr in the cause of Birth Control, and viewed her conversion to Theosophy with more amusement than respect. Ladies held aloof from Adyar, which served as a hindrance to Mrs. Besant's hope of spreading the Theosophical doctrines of which, after the death of Madame Blavatsky, she was the authorized exponent, in both Asia and Europe. The chilly feeling towards her got colder still when it was learnt that a rumour was afloat that she was the last Avatar of Vishnu, and had been worshipped as such by a highly respected but very senile Brahmin. It deepened into marked hostility when evidence was given in the courts that one of her assistants taught vicious habits to boys entrusted to her care, and she showed great reluctance to get rid of him, presumably not realizing how much physical and moral injury was thereby inflicted.

The case in which these facts came out was one in which the father of a Brahmin youth, in whom she had discerned the reincarnated Christ, and in whose honour she founded the "Order of the Star in the East," endeavoured to get the arrangement by which he had given her the guardianship of the boy revoked, on the ground that she was unfit to be trusted with that responsibility. The case came to the final court of appeal, the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords, which found that the lad was old enough to choose for himself, and he elected for Mrs. Besant's guardianship. He later repudiated the honour which his guardian had endeavoured to impose on him.

In these circumstances it was natural that Mrs. Besant should return to her previous love, and while retaining her position as High Priestess of Theosophy, should turn her main efforts into the field of Indian politics, and that in this field she should show a strong animus against the British element in Indian affairs. She aspired to be to the three hundred millions of Indians what Parnell had been to the four millions of Irish. There is, I think, no reason to doubt that she sincerely believed that thereby she was doing a great service to India; nor, on the other hand, that her judgment was unduly biassed by personal feeling.

In 1915 she bought a paper and re-christened it *New India*, and started a "Home Rule League." Propagandists for changes in Government, whether they merely want to reverse the Ins and Outs, or are aiming at revolutionary changes, are naturally apt to depict the existing Government in the blackest possible light; and *New India* with great energy and effectiveness set to work to damage British prestige. The real Indian quarrel with British rule in India then and since was not that it was bad, but simply that it was non-Indian. To continue it on the ground that if it ceased Indians could not replace it by native rule equally good was an insult to the Indian character, and the greater the truth the greater the insult. I had once an interesting talk with a hot young nationalist. I said to him, "If you judge British rule by reference to an ideal standard, you will find much fault in it. But if instead you compare it with other existing Governments, you will find it makes a very fair showing." He said, "I go further than that, sir, I say it is the best Government there is anywhere in the world."

Nationalism of so candid and generous a type commands our respect, but was not the sort needed to make the Home Rule movement fierce and dangerous enough to compel the British Parliament to pay attention to its demands, which was what Mrs. Besant wanted.

New India declared that the cause of the Allies was righteous, and that by the might of India it must prevail; and that since England would be saved from destruction by the victory achieved by Indian valour, she must be called upon to grant India freedom. Its indictment of British rule was to the effect that the poverty of the masses of the Indian people (which was, according to its statements, so extreme that if they had been true the majority of the inhabitants would have died of famine in any single year) was entirely due to British rule and to the high salaries paid to British members of Government services. Let these be replaced by Indians, as they would be under Home Rule, and taxation could be reduced enormously, and expenditure on "nation-building services" simultaneously increased greatly. Actually, even if Indians could be found to do the work equally well and equally conscientiously, which certainly would not be possible immediately though it might be ultimately, and if they would consent to serve at very much lower salaries, of which there seemed to be no immediate prospect, the saving would be inappreciable as, though the salaries which had to be paid to bring men out were, on Indian standards, fantastically high, the number of men receiving them was extremely small. A much better case could have been made out for the proposition that the desired improvements in public finances could be effected by reduction in army expenditure, but *New India* was precluded from demanding that by its attitude towards the war. Mrs. Besant's plan for Civil Service Reform was simplicity itself. Appointment was to continue to be by competitive examination open to all subjects of the Empire alike, but the examinations were to be held in India through the medium of Indian vernaculars.

Her most effective line of attack was on the Cotton Excise, which she denounced as Protection for the foreigner. The Indian Government had been driven by financial necessity to levy small import taxes on cotton cloth, but under pressure from the Lancashire cotton lords Parliament had only permitted this on con-

dition that an equivalent excise duty was levied on cloth produced in Indian mills. In 1915 both duties were $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent *ad valorem*. This arrangement could easily be justified in Westminster as entirely in accordance with the Free Trade doctrine of "taxation for revenue only," and experience showed that it had not checked the expansion of the cotton-mill industry in India, while it gave a minute degree of protection to hand-loom weavers. But there was no denying that not only the mill-owners, but all vocal Indian opinion, and the Indian Government itself, had protested vigorously against the excise, and that it had been imposed on India by the Lancashire vote in the House of Commons. I myself described it as "an insult rather than an injury to India," and in recent years Lancashire has had to pay, in loss of nearly all its Indian market, and consequent impoverishment and unemployment, very dearly for its arrogance before the war in this matter.

Another common complaint in *New India*, still more stressed, was the somewhat fantastic one that Indian manhood had been "emasculated" by the provisions of the law with regard to firearms, since licences to carry them were hard to get for Indians. But the essence of the *New India* doctrine was that the British character was of a lower order, being grossly materialistic, whereas Indian spirituality was demonstrated even in the simplest matters, as for instance in the fact that the Indian villager attributes all sorts of calamities and diseases to the activities of malignant spirits. In one way or another *New India* succeeded in creating a widespread belief that British rule was cruel and oppressive. Villagers, when asked "How about your own district, how about your own Collector?" would reply, "Oh, he is a good man," but showed that the idea had been instilled into them that, as such, he must be a rare exception among British officials. As time went on I began to hear complaints that the old warm friendliness which had previously greeted visitors to Indian villages, and which I myself always experienced, was giving place to a chilly air of suspicion.

In her work of damaging British prestige Mrs. Besant was powerfully assisted by the advent of the cinema and Hollywood films. In these Indian audiences had what they supposed was an opportunity of seeing the "European" in his home life as he actually was, and seeing was believing. That life as depicted by

Hollywood was not quite the same thing as life lived in England did not occur to them, and the inferences to be drawn can readily be imagined. With regard to feminine virtue a remark made by a young Indian to an Englishwoman without any intentional courtesy was typical—"Of course we know that all European ladies are immoral"—and the conviction that "European" men were generally addicted to drunkenness and crimes of violence could not fail to have been as deeply implanted. To a certain extent also the ground had been prepared for her by other agencies. Soon after I arrived in Madras I asked my "boy," "Tom, what are they saying in the bazaar?" It was that when the Germans came and occupied India rice would be six Madras Measures (20 lb.) the rupee instead of four. At another time the report went round that the German army had occupied London and that the King of England had fled for refuge to the Nizam of Hyderabad. The bombardment of Madras by the *Emden*, causing a panic rush from the city, produced a state of mind favourable to the acceptance of such rumours.

Lord Pentland was, on principle, very opposed to interference with the liberty of the Press; and he was also very tolerant of attacks on the Government in vernacular papers, which he attributed to ignorance and misunderstanding rather than to malice. Accordingly, when at the outbreak of the war proposals for control of the Press were mooted from Simla, he urged that instead bureaux should be established to supply early and reliable information to all papers. But attacks by Indian journalists, which naturally would be taken by readers with a grain of salt, were one thing, persistent vilification of everything British by a distinguished Englishwoman quite another. In the opinion of the Madras Government it was doing too much damage. Accordingly in 1915 Lord Pentland wrote to the Viceroy, then Lord Hardinge, urging that Mrs. Besant should be deported till the end of the war. As yet the influence of her anti-British campaign had not spread much beyond the Madras Presidency, and Lord Hardinge refused to take action.

In the subsequent months the prospects of the Allied cause grew blacker, but Mrs. Besant did not see fit to abate the virulence of her anti-British campaign, which, as it supplied spicy reading, served to increase the circulation of *New India*, and stimulated

Indian competition along the same lines. The Government of India, with Lord Chelmsford now Viceroy in place of Lord Hardinge, altered its view, and in March 1917 declared officially that the Home Rule campaign must be discouraged. Lord Pentland accordingly appealed in the Legislative Council for a cessation of political controversy during the time of peril, and personally pleaded with Mrs. Besant for a truce. Finding this effort fruitless, with the approval of Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the Secretary of State, in June 1917 he interned Mrs. Besant in Ootacamund, and ordered her and her two chief assistants to refrain from all political activity.

Mr. E. S. Montagu as Secretary of State for India

On July 12th Mr. Chamberlain resigned office, a scapegoat for the mismanagement of the Mesopotamia campaign; on July 19th Lady Pentland received a letter from her husband ending with a hastily written postscript, "S. of S. for I.!! Edwin Montagu!!" It appears from the Preface to Montagu's *Indian Diary*, which his widow published after his death, that Mr. Lloyd George, while anxious to have Montagu in his Government, was reluctant to give him the India Office, but Montagu, inspired by an overwhelming desire to be of service to India, would accept nothing else. In India a Secretary of State of any other name and family would have been more welcome, in consequence of certain events that had occurred before the outbreak of the war.

To make these events intelligible it must be explained that after the closing of the Indian mints to the free coinage of silver, Indian currency had been managed with the view of keeping the exchange value of the rupee as near as possible to 1s. 4d. This had to be done by regulating the flow of silver into Indian currency, since the circulation of cheques and rupee notes in India was then inappreciable (it still is small), in comparison with the mass of pecuniary transactions effected by the passing of silver rupees from hand to hand. A large part of the Indian revenue was (and is) devoted to meeting sterling obligations in London; to get the necessary funds the Secretary of State periodically sold in London, for sterling, bills entitling the purchaser to receive rupees in India, which are bought by importers of Indian exports. In order that there should be a demand for these bills, called "Councils," it was

necessary that there should be a large excess of Indian exports over and beyond the amount necessary to pay for imports, and India had to produce that excess and sell it abroad in order to find the money to meet those same sterling obligations. Hence on the average the sterling expenditure of the Indian Government was balanced by Indian surplus exports, and was met by equivalent sale of Councils. The payment of Councils was in the first place in rupee paper money, but the notes were speedily presented for encashment in rupees, and the Government of India had to buy silver and coin rupees in large quantities to meet this obligation.

But it was only on the average that these various payments balanced, owing to the fact that while there was little variation in short periods in the sterling requirements of the Secretary of State, there was a great variation from year to year in Indian ability to export goods in sufficient quantities to obtain the necessary sterling, partly owing to fluctuations of prices but mainly to the variability of monsoons. Good monsoons were followed by large export surpluses; the demand for Councils was then great, and the Secretary of State had to sell them freely to prevent the exchange value of the rupee from rising above the prescribed limit, and the Indian mints had to pour out rupees for their encashment. Bad monsoons had the reverse effect, the demand for Councils dwindled. To prevent too great a fall in the rupee exchange the Secretary of State had then to restrict the sale of Councils as far as possible, meeting his obligations out of reserves; the Indian mints could take a holiday, and Government purchases of silver became unnecessary.

Hence while India was a great purchaser of silver, its purchases varied greatly from year to year, and the entry or non-entry of the Secretary of State into the silver market as a big buyer was the chief factor in driving the world price of silver up or down, and dealers in the silver market were keenly alert to estimate his requirements and forecast his probable action.

In 1906-1908 the purchases of silver and coinage of rupees was large, and famine in 1907 caused the demand for Councils to fall so low that the rupee exchange fell to a figure that alarmed the authorities. A succession of good monsoons followed, Councils were in demand, rupees had to be put into circulation, the store of silver for coining fell, but no tenders for the supply of silver were asked for by the Secretary of State. The longer he held off

buying the more convinced dealers became that in the end he would have to buy soon and largely. Silver boomed. Then suddenly the announcement was made that no tenders would be asked for; all the silver required had been bought secretly from Messrs. Samuel Montagu & Co. Silver slumped, some of the rival firms were bankrupted, and with them the Indian Specie Bank of Bombay, inflicting heavy losses on many Indians and some Europeans, and Messrs. Samuel Montagu acquired a dominant position in the silver market. Edwin Montagu, the second son of Lord Swaythling, the head of the Montagu firm, was Under-Secretary of State for India at the time, an unfortunate coincidence to say the least. Lord Pentland's astonishment that after these events he should be put in full control of the Government of India, with management of its currency directly in his hands, can well be understood.

The form which Montagu's zeal to serve India took was a resolve to bring about a drastic political "reform." The way had to some extent been prepared. Lord Hardinge as Viceroy of India had already come to the conclusion that some change would be necessary after the war in the political constitution of the Indian Empire, and that it must be in the direction of increasing the Indian share of power and responsibility; and Mr. Lionel Curtis went to India to explore the situation. He came to Madras at the end of 1916 as Lord Pentland's guest. I was present at a small gathering to meet him. He explained how the reconciliation of Boer and British had been effected in South Africa, how the way had been prepared by "Round Circles" at which representative men on both sides had met and discussed practical proposals in strict confidence. He asked whether the same plan could be followed in Madras—could we suggest an equal number of representative Indians to make a similar Round Circle with us? We could not. Very few Indians were considered capable of resisting the pressure that would be put on them to report outside the Circle what would be said inside it. Mr. Curtis, however, sketched out the scheme termed "diarchy," by which some departments of Government in the provinces should be transferred to ministers chosen from and responsible to elected legislative councils, while others continued to be entrusted to officials. This proposal served Montagu as a basis, and his *Indian Diary* shows how many

variations he deduced from it—always with two aims, one that the “reform” should be as drastic as possible, the other that it should bear his own stamp.

He lost no time in setting to work. On August 20th he announced in the House of Commons that the Government would take steps to confer self-government on India as early as possible, and that he himself would shortly visit India to prepare a scheme. At the same time he ordered the Viceroy to order Lord Pentland to release Mrs. Besant from all restrictions on her liberty. After protesting to the uttermost short of sending his resignation, Pentland gave in, and Mrs. Besant in jubilant mood resumed her anti-British campaign with renewed zest and greatly increased effectiveness. The seal was set upon her triumph when she was elected President of the Indian National Congress. Pentland, who had shortly before promised Mr. Chamberlain to stay on after the expiry in October of his terms of office, felt himself precluded from sending his resignation, as he would have in normal circumstances, for the fortunes of the Allies were at their lowest, with submarineing at its maximum and the war going badly on most fronts. Characteristically also he allowed no hint to go out that he was not personally responsible first for the internment of Mrs. Besant and then for her release only a few weeks afterwards. He held that in such circumstances the provincial government must stand the racket, rather than let any damage that could be prevented be inflicted on the prestige of the Empire. Thus he allowed himself to be plausibly represented as a malignant but impotent enemy to Indian aspirations.

Nevertheless the truth came out; it was revealed in a leader in the Calcutta *Statesman* of October 17th. When, not long afterwards, Montagu was in Calcutta* he had an interview with the editor, and in terms of high indignation accused him, not of indiscretion, but of disregard of truth and neglect to verify his facts,† hoping no doubt that in self-defence the editor would reveal the source of his information, in which hope he was disappointed.

* He arrived in Bombay on November 10, 1917, and left India to return home on April 24, 1918.

† “I said, ‘do you ever verify your facts? Is it one of your traditions that it does not matter whether a thing is true or not as long as it gives you a text for a leader?’ ” *Indian Diary*, p. 96.

His Diary shows that he had previously accused Lord Pentland of revealing confidences, what confidences the Diary does not specify, and had received on landing in Bombay an indignant denial of the charge, which denial, he says, did not alter his opinion.*

He spent the week from December 14th–22nd in Madras, and naturally did not find the atmosphere cordial. Lord Pentland had organized a second Industrial Exhibition, in buildings finely designed by the Government architect, Mr. W. H. Nicholls, nearly twice as large as that of 1915, and showing a remarkable advance in the quality and variety of exhibits. It was immensely popular, and yielded a substantial surplus to the War Fund. Montagu was taken to visit it, but did not mention it in his Diary, in which he found room, however, to insert an adverse criticism of the Madras Zoo. Further, he got little help or encouragement with regard to his proposed reforms. The members of the Madras Government were unanimously of opinion that the subject should not have been raised before the end of the war, and were anxious to impress upon his mind how great was the injury to the prestige of the Government which he had accomplished by his action in reference to Mrs. Besant, but they roused his resentment instead of contrition. Lord Pentland held that the possibilities of the Morley–Minto reforms had as yet been by no means fully exploited; and that the most necessary reforms were more generous financial arrangements, making possible great advances in education and health services, and encouragement of agricultural and industrial advance, the encouragement of Indian initiative and co-operation on these lines, and the development of local self-government. All these ideas Montagu, with the bias of the Parliamentary politician, dismissed as mere trifling.† In outside circles Mr. (Sir) C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, an able young lawyer in close touch with Mrs. Besant, seems to have been the only person who agreed more or less with his ideas. Dr. T. M. Nair, the leader of the non-Brahmin party, was only willing to accept a transfer of authority to an elected council if representation were on a communal basis—otherwise, he feared, it would only strengthen Brahmin dominance.‡

For my part, I had a long talk with Mr. Charles Roberts, M.P.,

**Indian Diary*, p. 4.

† *Ibid.*, p. 125.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

who was a member of the Committee that accompanied the Secretary of State, and who invited me to dine with him privately. I poured out to him my ideas on the most desirable measures of reform, in the hope—a vain one—that they might influence the drafting of the new measure. I saw Montagu once only, at a garden party at Government House. I saw him as a tall, lean figure, stalking gloomily about, apparently neither giving nor receiving pleasure from conversation with the people who were introduced to him. His Diary shows that my impression was pretty correct.

When the report of the Committee appeared, presenting Montagu's scheme for the new constitution as the joint work of the Secretary of State and the Viceroy, Mrs. Besant denounced it in *New India*, if I remember her phrasing accurately, as "a bitter insult to a suffering people." This I took to be the propagandese way of expressing the opinion that it went farther along her lines than she had hoped, but that she thought that Montagu might yet be pushed a little farther. Some trifling concessions were in fact extorted, and then she declared that the measure, as thus inappreciably amended, was worthy of Indian acceptance. But her Indian readers were not as familiar as I was with the language of British party propaganda, and put a very unfavourable construction on this, as they supposed, sudden *volte face*, and her influence with them faded away with astonishing rapidity. She took the reverse with her usual courage, but it was evident that she felt the blow keenly.

The Problem of Political Reform

I think it is worth while here to explain the ideas which I was at the time putting forward whenever I found a listener, though at the risk of seeming too egoistic. Before I came to India I had formed the opinion that Lord Morley in pushing forward political reform while refusing to allow the provincial governments to assist Indian industrial advance, was putting the cart before the horse. He had previously, in the discussion on the proposal of a legal eight-hour day, shown himself to be too much dominated by early-nineteenth century *laissez-faire* doctrine, and there was far less legitimate scope for *laissez-faire* in India than in Great Britain. India, it seemed to me, was far from being able to dispense with

British assistance, and what was needed was fuller and more active co-operation between the people and the Government for advance in general well-being. Hence I was in entire agreement with those views of Lord Pentland's of which Mr. Montagu was so scornful.

When political reform did come, I held that it should be guided as far as possible by Indian rather than by British ideals of good government and democracy. These, it seemed to me, were those embodied in the principle of the Open Durbar. The nominal rulers—the Rajah and his Diwan—should be the real rulers, but they should be ready to listen to the wishes and complaints of the people; then, after these had been understood and considered justly and sympathetically, the rulers should announce their decisions in plain terms and abide by them. I could not imagine that Indians would be satisfied with what we call “representative government,” in which we find our destinies controlled sometimes by powerful individuals at whose identity we can merely guess, at others by “responsible ministers” whose purposes and motives are a mystery to us; and we are denied the right to protest, on the ground that we, by virtue of our parliamentary votes, have given our approval to the actions of those rulers.

Simply because people in India did know who was really responsible for governmental acts—except in cases where the Secretary of State kept his hand hidden—and could show their approval or disapproval, it seemed to me that the system of government, *as a system*, in Madras, at least as I knew it, was really more democratic than in England. That it should be more democratic in its actual working it would have been necessary that education and political consciousness should be much more widely diffused. As it was, I found Lord Pentland's administration much more responsive to the popular will than any central administration I had known at home. Hence I never expected anything but an increase of discontent to result from Mr. Montagu's infusion of a degree of Parliamentarism into India. When this result was reached, I asked an able young Indian, “How is it that the Reforms have made things worse instead of better?” He said, “We were discontented, we wanted phrases to express our discontent, and for lack of suitable phrases of our own we fell back on those of Whig political philosophy, and were taken at our word. But those

phrases did not express our real wishes, so naturally we are more discontented than before."

The system by which Government decisions were reached in India had its merits. The rule, as for instance when new legislation was under consideration, was that an explanation of the suggested measure, and of the considerations urged for and against it, was sent by the Viceroy's Council to the Governors of the Provinces. They in turn sent memoranda on the subject to selected individuals, official and non-official, whose opinions were considered worthy of respect, asking for their comments. These the Governor's Council considered, and then framed their answers to the Viceroy's Council, which then came to its decision. If it decided that the suggested legislation was desirable, it asked the Secretary of State's permission to legislate. I have mentioned above that in this way I was asked for my opinion on certain measures proposed to prevent excessive subdivision of holdings of land; later I was similarly asked for it on the subject of framing a Trade Union law. But when memoranda were drawn up by the provincial government in response, the non-official consultant heard no more of the matter; he might guess as he liked what had been the effect, if any, of his participation in the consultation.

This system was well adapted to prevent hasty and ill-considered measures, but it tended to give too much weight to the opposition to change, and to delay necessary action unduly. Further, as political education was diffused, and a vigilant Press watched all Government proceedings with very critical eyes, I thought it was not sufficiently public. Decisions were made first, public debate came afterwards; then all those people who approved of the decision acquiesced in silence, whereas those who disapproved were vigorously vocal. In consequence measures which might have been generally approved if debated in public beforehand were apt to be made to appear to the bulk of newspaper readers as either foolish or wicked or both.

The appropriate remedy, I contended, was to create, at the centre, a Chamber elected by the widest possible franchise, for the open debate of public affairs. It should have the right of questioning responsible officers of State, who should be obliged to submit their proposals to it and hear them debated, and it should have the right to pass resolutions on such and other matters.

But then it should leave the final decision to the Viceroy, with this proviso, that when it was contrary to the opinion of the Chamber he should state his reasons.

Lord Willingdon's suggestions to Montagu on his arrival in Bombay in October 1917, though relating only to provincial government, embodied the same principle. They were (1) complete autonomy for the provinces, (2) legislative Councils with large elected and small nominated membership (e.g. 60 elected, 10 nominated), (3) no limitation on the veto of the Governor. Montagu reports him as saying that the principle of the *hukm*, i.e. the final edict by the head of the Government, "is understood perfectly by all Indians and would not be resented."*

Exactly how much of this I said to Mr. Charles Roberts I do not remember. What I do recollect is that I deprecated the idea that it was provincial government that was so much in need of reform, and argued that on the one hand concessions to the politicians should be made at the centre, where alone they could give some satisfaction, and on the other that the path to real self-government should be sought in the towns and villages.

The line of demarcation between Economics and Politics is anywhere a vague and uncertain one, and largely a matter of academic convenience. In India, where the State *inter alia* is everywhere the ultimate landlord, and over vast areas, including two-thirds of the cultivated area of Madras Presidency (to say nothing of the waste), the direct landlord to whom the cultivator pays his dues, where it also owns the railways and works many of them, provides irrigation water and guards against famines, it is impossible to keep the two subjects apart. I made no attempt to do so. On the other hand, in view of the inevitability of important political changes, I considered it my duty to try to give my students more insight into the problems which India would have to face.

I told them, for instance, that Governments were like cows; that a cow given only enough food to keep herself would devote it to that use, and yield no milk. For a cow to be profitable she must be better fed, up to double that quantity. Similarly a Government allowed only a minimum revenue would spend it all on defence at home and abroad—on collecting that revenue, and

* *Indian Diary*, p. 5. *

maintaining army, police, law courts, gaols, etc., apart from what it wasted, since all Governments, like all private persons who have money to spend, waste something. For a Government to give the people the beneficial services for which they rightly ask, it must be fed with a much bigger revenue. I offered them a new slogan—"India groans under the oppression of insufficient taxation"—and expounded, with illustrations, the doctrine of the Economy of Communal Expenditure.

I pointed out that while it was a political principle that taxation and representation should go together, i.e. that the community which is taxed should be represented, it was an economic fact that they do—that representation of the people on a purse-controlling elected chamber brings about more taxation. It was to get more money that the Kings of England instituted our House of Commons, and it was through seeing how effective that device had proved during the Napoleonic wars that Continental monarchs decided to imitate the example; while the enormous increase in county expenditure following the creation of County Councils illustrated the same tendency.

As Campbell-Bannerman's saying, "Good government is no substitute for self-government" was then being quoted continually, I asked them to observe that it was just as true that self-government was no substitute for good government. What they wanted was self-government at least as good as the bureaucratic rule of the I.C.S. Self-government was bound to come. University students need not bother so much about making it come quickly—rather they should aim chiefly at making it as good as possible when it did come.

When the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform scheme was published I was asked by the Principal of the Presidency College to explain it to the students. When I had done so they asked, "Is it a real approach to more self-government?" I said, "I believe it is, but how would you test the matter?" They said, "By seeing whether it gives us more freedom to determine the tariff as we like." I said, "Yes, I feel sure it will." Lancashire knows how fully that prediction was justified. I had been trying to get warnings of the wrath to come through to the cotton men, then on the eve of their greatest and most disastrous boom, but of course with no result.

Financial Readjustment

I shall have more to say below on the working of the reformed constitution in Madras in its first two years. Apart from the introduction of dyarchy, its most important factor is that it conceded at last to the provinces the larger measure for decentralization for which Madras and Bombay had been agitating for half a century. Since a certain degree of control over the provincial governments had been conferred upon the electorates, it was admitted that the Delhi-Simla control could be relaxed, that to the provinces there should be assigned certain heads of revenues collected within their own boundaries, and that they should be responsible for certain heads of expenditure. The division of resources and duties was referred to a Financial Relations Committee,* of which Lord Meston was Chairman. It recommended the transfer of Land Revenue, Excise, Stamps (Judicial and Commercial), and Registration to the provinces, together with any surplus of revenue accruing from Irrigation Works and Forest Administration, the former being a substantial amount in the Punjab, and the latter in Burma, while the revenue from Stamps chiefly accrued to Bengal and Bombay, the former being, through the zemindari system and Permanent Settlement, the most litigious of the provinces, and the city of Bombay the chief centre of speculation and stock exchange, as well as the busiest port. In 1920-1 Land revenue yielded 31,97 lakhs of rupees, Excise 20,46, Stamps 10,96, and Registration 1,12, while the net revenue from Irrigation and Forests taken together was inappreciable. Out of these revenues the provinces had to meet the cost of police and courts of justice, education, sanitary and scientific services, departments of agriculture, commerce, fisheries, etc., and the grants to local authorities necessary to induce them to improve their services. On the other hand the Central Government was to retain the income from customs, income tax, salt and opium (respectively Rs. 3190, 2219, 1096 and 353 lakhs of rupees in 1920-1), and the profits from railways (averaging about 540 lakhs of rupees†—say £4 millions), post office and currency; and to defray the expenditure on defence, debt charges and all-India services.

* Report Cmd. 724 (1920).

† A lakh = 100,000 rupees. Exchange rates fluctuated wildly in 1920-1, but have since been fixed at Re.1 = 1s. 6d. Hence a lakh = £7,500.

This new arrangement, the Committee estimated, would increase the spending power of the provinces by 18,50 lakhs of rupees, but leave the Central Government with a deficit of 9,83 lakhs of rupees, which would have to be met by contributions from the provinces. Those provinces, Madras, the United Provinces, Punjab and Burma, which had previously been worst treated in the distribution of income, gained most; and consequently were called upon initially to make the largest contributions, but the Committee proposed that this should gradually be adjusted, so that all should contribute in proportion to their ability.* So far as the initial contributions were concerned this arrangement was carried through, except that Bengal, the wealthiest of the provinces, was excused even its minute contribution, but clamour from Bombay and Calcutta, and the pressure which those wealthy cities were able to put upon the House of Commons, led to the addition of a proviso that no contribution of any province should be increased, and provision was also made for provinces to share to some degree in any future increase in the yield of the income tax.

The provincial governments had urged at the time that the heads of expenditure which ought to increase, and the less elastic

* The following table shows the proposed settlement in detail. Columns A = estimated increased spending power, B = proposed initial contributions, C = residual gain to province, D = estimated equitable share of total provincial contributions.

Province	Lakhs of Rupees			D Per cent
	A	B	C	
Madras	5,76	3,48	2,28	17
United Provinces	3,97	2,40	1,57	18
Punjab	2,89	1.75	1,14	9
Burma	2,46	64	1,82	6½
Bombay	93	56	37	13
Bengal	1,04	63	41	19
Bihar and Orissa	51	nil	51	10
Central Provinces	52	22	30	5
Assam	42	15	27	2½

sources of revenue, were assigned to them, while the Central Government got the two great expanding revenues, Customs and Income Tax, and the Army was the one expense which could be cut down, and that therefore no provincial contributions should be exacted at all. After an intermediate period of financial stringency, this contention was proved correct, and the provincial contributions were dispensed with.

Meanwhile India had other problems to face than the alteration of its system of government.

NOTE.—*Financial Imperial and Provincial Adjustments, 1904–1919*

These are summarized in the *Madras Year Book, 1923*, as follows:

In 1904 commenced a new period, known as the period of quasi-permanent settlements, in which the principle of equality [between the provinces] was first recognized. It was laid down, in the words of the Decentralization Committee Report, that "so far as possible the same share of the chief sources of revenue should be given to each province, to ensure a reasonable equality of treatment." This principle, however, was not carried into practice in the settlements made in the years 1904 and 1905, under which, for instance, Bombay received one-half of the revenue under the heads Land Revenue, Stamps, Excise, Income-tax and Forests, while Madras received one-half of Stamps and one-fourth of the other four. The matter was pressed on the Government of India, and Sir Edward Baker acknowledged the inequality of treatment and promised amendment; and in 1908 this promise was fulfilled and a half-share of all the five heads given to both Provinces.

This treatment, however, was short-lived. In 1911 began what was known as the permanent settlement.... The Government of India retained the option of distributing among the Provinces special grants both recurring and non-recurring out of India's surplus revenues. The net result, comparing Madras and Bombay for convenience again, was that both received the whole of the revenue from Forests and Registration, and half the revenue from Land Revenue, Stamps and Income-tax. But, while Bombay was allowed to take the whole of the Excise, less a fixed assignment equal to one-half of the revenue accruing at the time of settlement, and was allowed to enjoy the increment under this head of growing revenue, Madras was allowed only one-half of the revenue from that source. . . . The option retained by the Government of India to distribute surplus grants developed

into an undesirable system of doles. In this respect also Madras fell short of getting her share thus:

For a population of $41\frac{1}{2}$ millions, Madras obtained a recurring grant of 28.50 lakhs for Education during the years 1911-12 to 1919-20, Bengal with a population of $45\frac{1}{2}$ millions received 41.81 lakhs during the same period, and Bombay with a population of $19\frac{1}{2}$ millions received 21.45 lakhs. The distribution of non-recurring grants tells the same tale. In March 1911, when the Government of India distributed the opium surplus of 1910-11, Madras was given only 11 lakhs out of a total of 147 lakhs for Education and Sanitation, and, out of a total grant of 104 lakhs distributed among the various Provinces for miscellaneous objects, Madras did not receive a single rupee.

To this it must be added that Bengal, under the 1911-12 settlement, got three-quarters of the Excise Revenue instead of half, and all the revenue from land managed by the Government instead of half.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FAMINES OF 1918 AND 1920

MONSOONS and harvests were generally good to fair for a succession of years up to and including 1917, but the 1918 monsoons were so bad that the consequent harvests were among the scantiest known. The established system of combating famines was based on the assumption that somewhere or other there would always be grain enough in India to feed the whole population, and that the essential precaution was to see that the people had money enough to pay the enhanced prices. Hence every district had its list of desirable improvements, mostly to roads, to be carried out as "relief works." When prices rose to a level which indicated shortage, some of these were put in hand as "test works," and if the peasants came to them in considerable numbers more were started as relief works. Workers who came for employment—they mostly came in family groups—were paid money wages, and the supply of food generally left to private traders, though sometimes Government canteens were set up.

As I watched the situation in 1918, I came to the conclusion that conditions had changed since the last famine, and that the customary measures were no longer adequate. Improvement in communications and development of internal trade had produced a tendency to give up the old practice of accumulating small local stores of grain against harvest failure, and such stores had largely been swept away into the big markets, to be sold wherever the highest price was offered, and largely exported. Accordingly I wrote to the Madras papers when it became clear that famine was imminent, urging the immediate prohibition of export. This demand was widely echoed, and acceded to in course of time.

The crop deficiency specially affected the rice and millet-producing areas of South India, the Deccan and Madras Presidency suffering particularly. What was done in the Bombay Deccan by Dr. Harold Mann has been described above. Neither the rich rice-fields of Bengal nor the wheat-growing areas of the United Provinces and the Punjab were seriously affected.

A Controller of Supplies

In Madras relief works were opened, but in other respects old precedents were largely discarded. The despatch of grain by rail was controlled to prevent its being held up by speculators and transported from specially poor areas of deficient harvest to others where the people were better able to pay an inflated price, and an emergency appointment was made of a "Controller of Civil Supplies," in the person of Mr. R. B. Wood, the Collector of the Tanjore District, with whom I had come into contact in the matter of Kumbakonam birth-rate. We spent his first Sunday in his new office together in the Madras Club, mostly in long chairs on the veranda, debating the problem. I began by telling him that however well he did he would be denounced, and would get nothing out of the job but loss of reputation. He said that he was quite prepared for that. When the crisis was past I was delighted to find my prediction was completely falsified.

We anticipated a clamour demanding that the Government should fix maximum prices, and agreed that to do so would only aggravate the evil; to try to control prices without controlling supplies would be worse than futile. But Burma had its usual large surplus of rice available for export, and this was Wood's trump card. He arranged for the purchase, through Messrs. Best & Co., of as much of this supply as could be got, and for its sale throughout the Presidency at fixed moderate prices, making no attempt to interfere with the trade in locally grown rice. The Madrasi is a connoisseur in rice, as faddy about the sort he eats as any Englishman is about the brand of tobacco he smokes; and the Madras population at that time (sentiment changed later) would only buy the Burmese rice if it could afford no other. Hence all the price-controlled imported supply was available to meet the needs of the poorest consumers, and the fact that it was on sale kept profiteering dealers in the fancied varieties in check, while the distress that would otherwise have been caused by the rise of food prices was mitigated by the facts that agricultural wages were usually paid in kind, that money was unusually abundant, as much paper as possible, including notes for Re.1 and Rs.2½ having been put into circulation, and that money wages were rising. Even then the fact that South India got through the period

of scarcity without any exceptional distress convinced me that the carry-over from the previous harvests had been much greater than had generally been supposed. Probably the unsuspected stores of grain were mostly the inferior millets which are grown as famine reserve crops in the areas of specially precarious rainfall.

The 1919 monsoon was excellent, and with large crops to sell and high prices the year 1919-20 was an exceptionally prosperous one for Indian cultivators.

In 1920 the monsoon failed again nearly as badly as that in 1918, but the deficiency chiefly affected the wheat-growing areas, and were countered by great imports of Australian wheat, made possible by the increase of the purchasing power of the Indian population.

The Indian Board of Agriculture, December 1919

In the interval the biennial meeting of the Indian Board of Agriculture took place at Pusa in December 1919. This so-called "Board" is a conference of the Departments of Agriculture of the Imperial and Provincial Governments on agricultural problems, and submits reports to these Governments embodying recommendations on future policy.

For the 1919 Conference the Madras Director of Agriculture, Mr. G. A. D. Stuart, had prepared a report on the collection and analysis of agricultural statistics, for the purpose of getting fuller and more accurate information on important points. He was prevented by illness from going to Pusa, and on his recommendation the Madras Government sent me in his place, since he had gone into the question fully with me. I made the journey to Pusa with Sampson, who later succeeded Stuart as Director of Agriculture, Cecil Wood, the Principal of the Coimbatore College, and Coleman of Mysore. From Madras to Calcutta took two nights and the intervening day; we started from Calcutta the following evening, were deposited, amidst a number of other delegates, at a wayside station where we feasted on the contents of a great hamper of fine oranges brought by the Central Provinces Director for exhibit. At daybreak we were marched down to the bank of the Ganges, ferried across, and turned into the abominable carriages of a metre gauge line, finally reaching the Central Government's Agricultural Research Station, made famous for the work on

wheat of Mr. and Mrs. Howard, in time for a midday meal. The days were warm and sunny, with brilliantly clear air, the nights cold, making open wood fires a luxury in the evenings, and freezing the ground around the tents in which we were housed.

The Board divided itself into small committees for the consideration of the various problems submitted to it, and I was put on that on Agricultural Statistics; and on that which, with Dr. Harold Mann as Chairman, had to report on the 1918 famine, and the new developments of famine policy indicated by that experience. In both cases we were able to submit unanimous reports, and see them unanimously adopted without amendment by the Board in full meeting. In presenting the Statistics report I had an easy task, as Stuart had prepared the ground so fully that all that was needed was to make a lucid explanation of his proposals and the reasons for them. The practical result was the addition of statistical officers to the Agricultural Departments which could afford to make the addition to their staffs.

The Famine Committee had to deal with the most important and difficult question before the Board. It owed much to the enthusiasm and resourcefulness of its Chairman, who had under his charge in the Bombay Deccan a great district of very precarious rainfall with very limited possibilities of irrigation in dry seasons. He was responsible for the majority of the suggestions submitted and approved, which included recommendation of improved methods of storing grain, encouragement of growth of drought-resisting crops, and of better fodder crops and ensilage, etc. Mr. Burt, of the United Provinces, contributed what I thought were probably valuable suggestions on the best methods of sinking wells in alluvial soils so as to prevent them from silting up. My own contribution dealt with the possibility of two bad monsoon years in succession, such as had caused the terrible Madras Famine of 1877-9. If the bad monsoon of 1918 had been followed by another in 1919, India would have entered upon the second year of scarcity with its grain reserves exhausted. I suggested that a special enquiry should be made into possible ways of meeting such an emergency.

The 1920 monsoon failure lent point to this contention, and I was again invited to attend the 1921 meeting of the Board

and to serve on the Famine Committee. Unfortunately my other duties then prevented my going, and I had to be content with sending a memorandum, which dealt mostly with questions of export of grain. At that time urban populations were clamouring for a standing prohibition of export, a suicidal measure, since obviously it would penalize the growing of a surplus in good and average years, and the normal production of a large exportable surplus was the best means of securing a safety margin against harvest failures. On the other hand it would be a fatal blunder not to take warning from the Irish Famine, when people starved to death in great numbers although adequate supplies of food for all were produced in the island, because millions of quarters of grain were exported by the rackrented peasantry to pay their dues to landlords and tithe-owners. The poverty-stricken and deeply indebted peasantry of India, now that Indian wheat and rice had been brought within the scope of the world market, would be brought under similar pressure to part with the stores needed to maintain life.

Two Famine Riots

A famine of cotton cloth afflicted India before the monsoon failure of 1918 produced its full effect on the retail market in grain. The war cut off a great part of the supply of Lancashire cloth and yarn, and practically prevented the importation of textile machinery, so that the Indian mills could not increase their plant appreciably, while various difficulties prevented them from resorting to night shifts. In Japan some new machinery was obtained from America, and the mills worked continuously through the twenty-four hours of the day and night; and imports into India from Japan, which previously had scarcely existed, increased to about 4 per cent of the total supply, while there was also an increased output from hand-looms. Nevertheless, the deficiency during the last year of the war and for some time after the armistice was extreme. Poor people did their best with what raiment they had, but distressing tales came from Bengal of women who could not leave their huts because they had not even rags to cover their bodies.

On the other hand the Indian mills made enormous profits. There was one period of twelve months in which the profits of



MOPAS DRINKING TODDY



THE ZAMORIN OF CALICUT WITH HIS BODYGUARD

the Bombay mills came to twice as much as the wages paid by them.

In Madras Presidency, with its warm and equable climate, clothing is much less a necessity than farther north, but the monstrous increase of price created much indignation against the last and nearest link of the profiteering chain of producers and distributors—the bazaar men in the local markets. In Madura there was what would have developed into an ugly riot if it had not been promptly suppressed.

For the story of the manner of the suppression I am indebted to the report in *New India*, the only full one that appeared in the Madras papers. It is as follows:

The report of the assembly of a mob to pillage the cloth-dealers' shops came quickly to Paddison, the Collector. He drove immediately to the spot and overtook the crowd when it was marching along a road which the municipality had resolved to put in repair, and along which they had deposited heaps of road metal (broken granite) in preparation, from which the men had gathered ammunition for the fray. When they saw the car coming, they threw themselves flat on the ground to stop it. Paddison got out, and sent for a horse. The horse was brought quickly, but before it came one of the flying stones knocked off Paddison's topee and another cut his head open. He tied it up with a handkerchief, mounted, and rode slowly through the midst of the crowd. When they recognized Paddison, and saw the blood oozing through the handkerchief, they dropped the stones and dispersed quietly to their homes. Later in the day they sent a deputation to Paddison's bungalow to express their deep regret at his having been hurt, and to assure him that there would be no more rioting in the city. Nor was there.

Not long before there had been a strike in Messrs. Harvey & Co.'s Madura spinning-mill, in which the operatives demanded a considerable increase of wages and reduction of hours. Paddison intervened, and, learning that it was the reduction of hours to which the firm chiefly objected, persuaded them to offer as a compromise to give double the advance of wage asked for, on condition that the demand for reduced hours was dropped. The operatives gladly accepted, and only asked in return that the firm would give them a sheep to sacrifice to Aiyana, the protector

of the depressed castes, for a feast in honour of so pleasing a settlement. The firm, very tactlessly, as we in Madras thought, refused, and so forfeited the gratitude that they might have earned, which was fully bestowed upon Paddison.

Not long afterwards I had the story of another incipient riot promptly suppressed, this time in Madras and over the sale of rice. I got it from the principal actor, a young business man who had been enrolled in the extremity of the war emergency as a voluntary police officer. He was called out to deal with a mob collected to attack the stores of a grain dealer. He marched his men to the spot, halted them in front of the store, and went forward to confer with the leaders. He learnt that the dealer had shut up the building, refusing to sell and declaring that he had no rice, whereas his neighbours were convinced that he had large stores. My friend selected a young and active policeman, directed him to climb up at the back and find out what stores there were. He did so and reported that the rice was there. Accordingly my friend hammered at the door till the dealer appeared, and told him that he must open and sell immediately, or the police would be withdrawn and he would be left to the mercy of the mob. Then perforce he did open. Meanwhile the leaders of the mob gave their directions to their followers; they must queue up, go in one at a time, women first, and buy only limited quantities, according to the numbers of the family to be fed. All were satisfied, and still some rice remained unsold, which was allowed to be bought for neighbours in need. Then my friend went hungry to the club for a delayed and well-earned breakfast, and related the adventure to me.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE WAR AND AFTER

The Part of India in the War

The Mesopotamian campaign began as a modest affair with the limited objective of safeguarding the properties of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. This was accomplished successfully by the Indian military authorities. But after the Turkish victory at Gallipoli, the Cabinet demanded a spectacular achievement from the Indian Army to offset the moral effect of that disastrous defeat. Accordingly the attempt was made to capture Baghdad with insufficient forces very inadequately supplied with stores of all sorts, and particularly deficient in means of transport and medical service. In the final result General Townshend had to surrender at Kut with 9,000 men, after 24,000 had been lost in attempts to relieve him.

It was then decided that the management of overseas expeditions was a task beyond the intellectual abilities of the Simla Army chiefs. The organization of the Mesopotamian campaign was taken over by the Home authorities and Indian participation in the war henceforward took the form of supplying men and material to British commands in various fields of war, and making a donation of £100,000,000 towards the general expenses. This donation was one result of a special appeal on April 2, 1918, from the Prime Minister to India to redouble its war efforts. In response also 200,000 more men were recruited, Europeans compulsorily, Indians and Anglo-Indians voluntarily. In Madras the native recruits were, I believe, almost exclusively Anglo-Indians and Adi-Dravidas. The former included perhaps the most distressed class in the population; many joined gladly to be decently fed for the first time in their lives. The Madras recruiting officer told me his method of getting untouchable Paraiyans to join. He said to them, "When you wear the King-Emperor's uniform, you will be able to walk through the Brahmin quarter and spit where you like."

Altogether during the war India contributed 800,000 combatants and 400,000 non-combatants to the Allied armies at the

cost of an addition to the debt of £153,000,000, besides increased taxes and great loss of life. The after-cost was enormously greater, for the post-war influenza epidemic ravaged India with such deadly effect that round about ten million lives were lost, mostly through subsequent pneumonia, the mortality being increased by the Indian code which obliges families to crowd round the bedside of a sick member.

The raising of the special loan of £100,000,000 was accomplished on the lines on which the Salvation Army raises its Self-Denial Funds. The various provinces were put in competition with one another, and the manner in which the subscriptions from each mounted up from day to day was graphically shown on gigantic hoardings. Thanks to the iron determination of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Governor of the Punjab, that his province should give its utmost in money as in men, its contribution was far greater in proportion to its resources than that of any other province, but O'Dwyer purchased his success at the cost of creating much discontent, which, kept underground for a time, burst forth calamitously later on.

Where the local governments tempered their zeal with discretion the later results of the raising of this loan were much more fortunate. Many large Indian subscribers put in their money purely in order to win the favour of the authorities, not expecting ever to see it again, or more than a very few instalments of the interest promised. When they found that the interest came to hand punctually, and that the banks readily accepted the script as security for loans, and still more, when they found the stock had gone to a premium, they realized that they had made a profitable investment, and became much more ready to subscribe to subsequent loans.

Jallianwala Bagh

In July 1918 the Montagu-Chelmsford report was published, on November 11th came the Armistice. Neither event gave India peace. With regard to the Reforms, it was inevitable that when power was to be redistributed each of the different sections of the population, severed from one another in many cases by ancient strife, should be agog to gain for itself as large a share as possible, and the interval that elapsed between the publication of the pro-

posals and the Royal Assent to the Act of Parliament based on them, which took place on December 23, 1919, gave ample time for resentment to grow among the disappointed sections.

But this was a trifling matter compared with the anger raised by a new movement on the part of the Government* to deal with an old problem. An account has already been given of the manner in which the land tenure law of Bengal under "Permanent Settlement," combined with the Hindu law of inheritance, created an ever-growing parasitic and privileged class of landed proprietors, of whom great numbers were very impoverished, but still scorned ordinary labour, and whom pride, poverty and idleness combined to make discontented and unhappy. To these the worship of Kali, the patron goddess of Bengal and Calcutta, served as an inspiration. To her, bloody sacrifices are continually being offered in the temple of Kalighat, the city's central shrine, where also innumerable images of Kali are sold, her full breasts, small waist and broad hips typifying the fertility and bounty of the motherland, while her multitudinous arms brandishing deadly weapons as she dances on a prostrate foe typify the destructive activities of Nature in India, the whole image being beautiful in the eyes of her devotees. Among these the idea was diffused that the most welcome offering that could be made to her was "a white goat," i.e. an Englishman. Hence a continual tendency to the emergence of murderous and terrorist gangs. It can be well imagined, in view of what has been said above about the ineffectiveness of Indian criminal procedure to deal with ordinary crime, that it was quite unable to suppress crime of this nature. This evil had been in existence for a decade or more. Presumably the termination of the war was deemed a good opportunity for making a fresh attempt to cope with it, though it was not then, I believe, specially rampant. It became much worse afterwards.

A "Seditious Crimes Committee," headed by Mr. Justice Rowlatt, was appointed to enquire into the problem shortly before the Armistice. It recommended that a special court of three judges should be appointed to try such cases, since witnesses were prevented

* In any particular case "the Government of India" might in actual fact mean either the Viceroy and his Council or the Secretary of State, without whose approval the Viceroy cannot act in any important matter, and whose orders he must obey. Either may take the initiative.

by intimidation from giving evidence openly; and that powers to intern suspected persons without trial should be conferred, subject to certain restrictions, on provincial Governors. These recommendations were received with indignation throughout the great Indo-Gangetic plain from Bengal to the Punjab, and also in Bombay. When draft Bills based on them were published in January 1919, a fierce agitation was set afoot to prevent the Viceroy from enacting them.

The excitement, so far as I could see, did not extend to Madras, and I can only make vague guesses at the psychological bases of the fierce resentment roused in the north. Partly no doubt it was due to failure to understand the restrictive safeguards, which seemed well devised to prevent miscarriage of justice. Perhaps also it was felt that the conferring on Indians of the British and alien machinery of elected Councils for giving effect to the popular will was a poor substitute for the time-honoured Oriental device of restraining the ruler by the fear of assassination. Perhaps also wherever Kali was venerated it was supposed that she might appreciate the sacrifice of "white goats" and reward it with more abundant crops and freedom for the land from the famines and epidemics by which she vents her anger when she is offended; and the harvest failures of 1918 may have been taken as a warning that it was an urgent matter to conciliate her.

In the midst of the agitation Mr. M. K. Gandhi came forward as leader. While he denounced the "Rowlatt Bills" he urged that they should be combated only by *Satyagraha* (soul force) and by the method of *ahimsa* (non-violence), by which he had compelled the Government of the Union of South Africa to come to terms with the Indian community there, and to pass its "Indian Relief Act" of 1914. Not only by virtue of that signal success, but also by his personal character, his asceticism, and the very meagreness and lack of corneliness of his small frame, like those of the Rishis of tradition, he was marked out for leadership in India. When the Viceroy gave his signature to the Bills, he proclaimed a *hartal*, i.e. a day of mourning and cessation of work, for March 30th.

It was when the agitation took hold of the Punjab, the chief recruiting-ground of Indian armies and the special home of the "fighting races," that it became really dangerous, and Gandhi proposed to go there to preach *ahimsa*, which, as he taught it,

was no merely negative idea, but the positive one that when conflict cannot, or should not, be avoided, the true Hindu must be prepared to suffer violence, but never, under any provocation, to inflict it, and must purge his heart of all feelings of hatred and resentment against his adversary.

Had Gandhi been allowed to carry out his intention, so great was his influence that he would very probably have prevented any disaster. But he was arrested, prohibited from entering the Punjab, and sent instead to Bombay, where he calmed the populace immediately and restored order. Meanwhile in the chief cities of the Punjab, and particularly in the holy city of Amritsar, great mobs collected, the telegraph wires were cut, and Europeans were brutally murdered. The affected districts were put under martial law, under the command of General Dyer. On April 13th a great mob, largely armed with *lathis*,* having collected in an open square with narrow approaches in defiance of General Dyer's prohibition, he marched in a body of soldiers and opened fire. The firing continued while the panic-stricken crowd was struggling to escape through the one narrow exit. Four hundred people were killed and a very large, but unknown, number wounded.

That was the "Massacre of Jallianwala Bagh."

After an official enquiry, General Dyer was relieved of his command, and prohibited from ever serving again in India. This sentence was approved by the House of Commons, but condemned by the House of Lords and by the *Morning Post*, which presented General Dyer with a sword of honour.

I heard what I believe was the true explanation of his conduct, never pleaded in public. It was that, on the evening before, he had visited in hospital a medical missionary lady who, when bicycling through a street on an errand of mercy, had been set upon by a mob which brutally ill-treated her, and left her lying in the roadway apparently dead. When the mob had moved on in search of other victims, women had come out of the neighbouring houses, picked her up, found a spark of life left, and in hospital she was slowly recovering. When General Dyer witnessed her condition and heard her story, he, as I was told, "saw red."

* Long-handled clubs made of the bulbous root and lower stalk of the male bamboo, sometimes further weighted with lead, the ordinary weapon of the Indian police in riots, not carried by them on ordinary occasions.

His judgment was distorted by just indignation, and the firing next day was hot-blooded revenge, and not, as to justify himself he had to plead, the result of cool calculation of the minimum of force necessary to suppress a formidable revolt.

The Mopla Rebellion

The reaction, even in Madras, was serious. There the European verdict was "Dyer has saved the Punjab and lost India." When the first news came through in a very understated form, I asked a leading Brahman what was the feeling among Hindus. He said, "We are very glad that the Government has suppressed the rebellion, and has done so promptly." But when fuller reports came, and particularly the report of the action of an infatuated young officer who compelled all Indians who passed through the street where the mob had perpetrated its worst outrage to crawl through on hands and knees, the feeling changed. Jallianwala Bagh is, and long will be, a lamentable and unforgotten memory. It was a bad prelude to the birth of the new Constitution.

Even worse was to come shortly afterwards. Mahomedan loyalty had been greatly strained during the war by the fact that the warfare in which Indian troops had been chiefly engaged, namely in Mesopotamia and Palestine, had been against the chief Mahomedan power, whose ruler, as Khalif, was also the religious head of Islam. The support given to the Arab revolt roused resentment, and when a treaty too adverse to Turkey to stand was signed at Sèvres on August 10, 1920, it was widely felt that the continued loyalty of the Mohammedans in the army had been abused, and wrongfully exploited to bring disaster to Islam. Two brothers, Mahomed and Shaukat Ali, set on foot a fierce agitation against the Government, ostensibly in defence of the Khaliphate. Gandhi immediately joined forces with them. He wrote to the Viceroy that he retained neither respect nor affection for the Government which had failed to impose adequate penalties on the perpetrators of the Jallianwala Bagh outrage, and permitted the injustice to Mahomedans of the Treaty of Sèvres. He hoped by joining this movement to effect a union of hearts whereby the ancient feud between Hindus and Mahomedans would be healed—the Hindus were to support the Khaliphate agitation, and the Mahomedans to give up the sacrifice of cows,



THE "KHILAFAT KING OF MALABAR"



GROUP OF NAIR WOMEN

so abhorrent to Hindus. It is unlikely that the Ali brothers had any intention, even if they had the power, of carrying out their part of the bargain.

In the course of the following twelve months the agitation spread to the Moplas of Malabar, of whom mention has been made above. They are, with few exceptions, labourers and poor; they eat meat when they can get it, and are great toddy-drinkers, their special variety of Mahommedanism not prohibiting alcoholic drink. From the political point of view the most important article of their creed is that if they die fighting after killing Hindus, they go straight to Paradise and all its joys. Hence whenever life is specially distressful in Malabar the temptation to run amok and do killing enough to ensure being killed may become overpowering.

Until August 1921 such outbreaks had been only small individual affairs, but then, under the Ali brothers' incitement, a general rebellion broke out, and there appeared a Mopla rebel leader of the whole community of about one million people out of the three millions of inhabitants of the District of Malabar, proclaiming himself to be the "Khilafat King of Malabar." All the Europeans who could be got at were murdered, and then the Moplas turned upon the Hindus. Many of them also were murdered, others, under fear of death, forced to shave their heads and recite the creed of Islam and thus undergo conversion.

In one of my letters home, dated September 9, 1921, which has been kept, I read, "One of the preparations which the Moplas made for their rising was to choose new names for the Hindu ladies whom they intended to add to their quotas of wives. The Mopla generally has only two wives, and of course the poorest only one. But the Nambudiris keep most of their women single and in the greatest seclusion. When the Nambudiri manor-houses were stormed by their Mopla coolies, most of these poor ladies were stripped naked and turned into the jungle. While the religious aspect of the rebellion is the most important, there is also an agrarian aspect. The Nambudiris were mostly easy-going but wealthy landlords."

It can readily be imagined that the suppression of this rebellion was no easy matter. Considerable bodies of British troops, with tanks and machine-guns, were hurried into the country, and troops

recruited from among the tribes of the wild hill country of Upper Burma were brought in for the jungle fighting. When the rebellion was suppressed the Hindu religious leaders had to be persuaded to readmit into Hinduism and their respective castes those who had undergone forced conversion on terms easy enough for acceptance.

The Mopla rebellion was a stunning blow to the hope of Hindu-Moslem unity. Gandhi's preaching of non-violent non-co-operation also found India insufficiently prepared to act on it. Wherever non-co-operation with the Government was attempted effectively, as in the form of the refusal to pay taxes, it speedily ceased to be non-violent, and after the murderous affair of Chauri Chaura on February 4, 1922, Gandhi called it off, confessing that he had made a "Himalayan Blunder." When, following Dean Swift's precedent in urging the Irish to "burn everything that came from England except the coals," he traversed the country inciting people to make bonfires of their imported clothes, great quantities of the offending garments were destroyed, but not without much regret afterwards among the donors for their lost property. On the other hand his propaganda for the use of *khaddar* (hand-woven cloth made of hand-spun yarn) and for the treating of the untouchable castes as brothers, had valuable permanent results.

Currency Eccentricities

As though the political conflicts were not trouble enough, the management of Indian currency from the Armistice onwards produced more awkward complications in Indian affairs.

During the war imports into India had been more restricted than exports. The normal excess of exports increased, and imports of gold, which usually partly balanced the accounts, ceased to be possible. Hence a greatly increased demand for Council bills payable in rupees. The value of the rupee could not be kept down to the official rate of 1s. 4d., and only with difficulty, by a great increase of coinage made possible by the help of the President of the United States of America, was prevented from rising appreciably above 1s. 5d. With the Armistice, freights, while remaining very high, declined sufficiently to allow for a great increase of exports from India, and still more from China, to meet the clamorous demands of the starved European markets. But since

those markets had also been starved of manufactured goods, the return flow of these to India and China, in payment for their exports, had to wait till the nearer customers had been more or less satisfied. Hence the "balance of trade in favour of India" during the year 1919 reached unparalleled figures,* and the rupee was forced up by December to 2s. 4d., nearly double its official value. The exchange value of Chinese silver money increased in an even greater degree, the reduction during 1914 and subsequent years of the world's silver output by one-third,† in consequence of the civil war in Mexico, contributing to this result. The bullion value of the silver in the rupee rose above its value as coin, making it profitable to melt down rupees, which would have forced the Government to coin at a loss.

The consideration of this currency problem was referred to what is known as the Babington-Smith Commission. Its report was signed at the end of December 1919, and published immediately afterwards. Just then the sterling price of silver reached its maximum of a little over 7s. per ounce and began to decline, Chinese exports shrinking in consequence of famine in North China, and the return flow of imports rising.

This change had not been anticipated by the Commission, which based its recommendations on the expectation that the high prices of silver and of commodities generally in the world markets would be maintained. They considered it necessary that the rupee should continue to be an overvalued token coin, and that therefore its exchange value should be fixed at a higher figure than the silver in it ever had reached or could be expected to reach in the future. It was to be fixed, not in terms of sterling as heretofore, but in terms of gold; viz. at 2s. gold, i.e. its value was to be that of 11·30016 grains of gold. For exchange with sterling, the sterling value of that quantity of gold had to be calculated. This

* The excess of exports of merchandise over imports in the pre-war quinquennium averaged Rs. 6½ crores (£4½ millions) per month, and was balanced to the extent of Rs. 3 crores by net imports of gold and silver, and by sales of Council Bills to the extent of Rs. 3½ crores. From August to December 1919 inclusive it averaged Rs. 12 crores, almost entirely balanced by sale of Council Bills, imports of gold and silver being restricted.

† Quinquennial average 1909-10 to 1913-14, 222 million oz.; 1914-15 to 1918-19, 169 million oz.

was to be calculated from the current exchange rate of the dollar. Put briefly, this meant that the rupee was to be made the equivalent of 0·48667 United States dollars. This clumsy and inconvenient arrangement was justified by the contention that it was desirable that Indian currency should be put on a gold basis irrespective of what happened to sterling. The real reason, I believe, was not fully expressed.

In the autumn of 1919, when the sterling value of the rupee was rising fast, and had just reached 1s. 10d., I put forward the proposal that the British £1 treasury note should be made legal tender in India at Rs. 10. This, I calculated, would prevent any further rise of the rupee when it reached 2s., would provide a substitute for the old means of balancing accounts by the import of sovereigns, and supply Indian traders with the most convenient means of paying for the imported goods they had on order when these at last came through. I still think this would have been the best, as well as the simplest, way of dealing with the emergency. I was told at the time by the Madras currency officer that it would not do. He said that sterling had gone phut and its case was hopeless. The Babington-Smith Commission perhaps entertained the same pessimistic delusion, and, though sitting and conferring in London, seems to have been in ignorance of the recommendations of the Cunliffe Commission for forcing up the £ sterling to its pre-war gold value.

The prescribed 2s. gold was considerably above the actual exchange value of the rupee, but the Commission expected that the excess of exports would continue with little abatement until the rupee reached that level, and subsequently could easily be maintained there. They, most unluckily, dropped the remark that, if it fell off, it could be brought up again by the sale of Reverse Councils, sterling drafts on the Secretary of State bought for rupees in India and cashed in London, which are, from the opposite point of view, purchases of rupees by the Indian Government paid for in sterling out of its reserves in London. But the Commission also added the warning that if world prices fell the whole policy must be reconsidered. They did fall very shortly afterwards, but the warning was unheeded.

On February 2, 1920, the Secretary of State issued his statement of the measures he would adopt to carry out the Commission's

recommendations. The most important was that "when occasion required" the Government of India would sell sterling drafts (Reverse Councils) at the rate specified by the Commission, and these sales began shortly afterwards. The current rate was then 2s. 8d., having been forced up by speculators in anticipation of this action, while 2s. gold was equivalent to 2s. 11d. sterling. Consequently every applicant who got drafts allotted to him got a free gift of 3d. per rupee, and it was not surprising that at the first issue the applications were just a hundred times as much as the drafts on offer, which amounted (if I remember rightly) to £1,000,000. Naturally when next week another issue was made, the would-be recipients of this bounty applied for about a hundred times as much as they could afford to pay for, in the hope of again receiving 1 per cent of their applications, and soon astronomical figures were reached. In passing, it may be remarked that it is hardly to be supposed that the Commission intended that those drafts should be sold otherwise than according to the usual practice, for the best price obtainable. Further, it is one thing to use the very expensive device of selling Reverse Councils to maintain a previously established exchange ratio, quite another to use it to force up the ratio to a greater height than the actual or any previous level.

Meanwhile the current of Indian trade was reversed. The excess of exports, which for December 1919 stood at about Rs. 11 crores, dropped in January 1920 to the pre-war average of Rs. 6 crores, owing to a rapid increase of imports, while from March onwards exports declined rapidly. The excess of exports dropped to less than Rs. 4 crores in May, in June that excess disappeared, and was succeeded by great excesses of imports, so that for the calendar year 1920 the total Indian imports were valued at Rs. 323 crores, and exports and re-exports at Rs. 273 crores only. The rupee exchange fell and fell. No selling of sterling drafts by dribbles could check this movement. Nevertheless it continued till the Indian sterling reserves had been reduced by £55,000,000, the rupees obtained in exchange being worth only about £25,000,000 at current rates. Indians and Europeans alike watched these proceedings with amazement and dismay, and wondered into whose pockets the lost £30,000,000 had betaken themselves.

The reserve being then so much depleted, the Secretary of State

raised a sterling loan in London to build it up again. He issued it at 7 per cent, and immediately the stock went to a high premium, indicating that 6 per cent would have been ample. At the same time a 6 per cent rupee loan was raised in India without difficulty. The difference in cost to India was greater than the mere 1 per cent, since the British Treasury collected the income tax on the interest of the sterling loan, the Indian that on the rupee loan. Then Indian amazement and dismay turned to resentment. I was then acting as Publicity Officer to the Madras Government. I wrote to the Government of India's Publicity Officer and asked what justification or explanation of the Secretary of State's action I could supply. He answered that I could only say that he had made a mistake in dealing in a market with which he was imperfectly acquainted. I thought such a statement, applied to one who had for two years been Financial Secretary to the Treasury, would be received with jeers, so I said nothing. But in the Council of State, the Indian Upper House, consisting of 33 non-official members elected on a very high property franchise, and 27 nominated official members, Mr. Lallubhai Samaldas, a highly esteemed Bombay banker, moved a resolution to the effect that in all future financial transactions the Secretary of State should ask for, and act in accordance with, the advice of the Government of India. That resolution was carried *nem. con.*, no hand nor voice, official or unofficial, being raised in defence of the Secretary of State.

Very shortly afterwards, in the beginning of 1921, there came a morning when all the members of the Madras Club were greeting one another joyfully with the cry, "Have you seen *Punch*?" *Punch* had arrived by that morning's post. Its cartoon showed Montagu looking at Gandhi squatting in his loin-cloth under a palm, and saying to him, "Look here, my friend, either you or I must go," to which Mr. Punch in the background adds, "Why not both?" By a striking coincidence, local daily papers that very morning brought the news that Gandhi had been arrested on the charge of sedition, and that Montagu had been dismissed from office.

A foolish indiscretion—the publication of a telegram without the sanction of the Cabinet—was the ostensible reason for his forced resignation. It was a severe blow to him. His widow writes

in her preface to his *Indian Diary*, "The welfare of India was the one overmastering passion of his life. . . . When he resigned his office in 1922 he seemed, in saying good-bye to his work for India, to lose the greater part of his interest in life; he was never the same man again."

During the four years and odd months of his tenure of office he undoubtedly started a new epoch in the history of India. The political change that he effected was great in itself, and by aggravating discontent and weakening the executive it necessitated further changes still to come; and his manner of dealing with Indian currency and finance gravely damaged British prestige. What Madras Club thought of his work for India has been indicated sufficiently; on the other hand many, if not most, Indian nationalists view it with gratitude as having given notable assistance to the realization of their aspirations. For my part, I regarded him as rather like an over-hasty obstetrician who imperils the lives of mother and babe by forcing delivery prematurely. That three hundred and fifty millions of people should acquiesce indefinitely in the domination of forty-five millions of aliens is not to be believed; that domination must end, but I thought that India was as yet very ill prepared for self-government, although the preparation, in Madras at least, was going on fast.* I believed that India had still much to gain from the rule of what, to the best of my knowledge, was the most disinterested and public-spirited bureaucracy the world had ever known. For these reasons I regarded Montagu's appointment as Secretary of State for India as most unfortunate.

But the course of political events since has made me doubt the accuracy of that judgment. The hope that a better spirit would animate Governments, and particularly our own Government, in international relations and in domestic policy, soon faded away, short-sighted materialism, imperialistic greed, and narrow nationalism emerged triumphantly, and munitioneers got a fresh grip on the control of public affairs. Had Montagu not seized his opportunity with both hands in 1917, there would very likely have been no advance on the British side towards meeting those Indian demands

* In the early days of the Home Rule agitation I asked a rising Indian politician what he thought about it. He snorted, "Self-government? Why, we cannot yet manage even our villages decently!"

for self-government which were bound to increase in volume and intensity; and once more the Irish accusation, "England never yields anything except through fear," would have been justified. Perhaps the final verdict on Montagu's career will be, "He lost India, and thereby saved the British Empire."

Since the above chapter was set up, I have learnt that another explanation of the extent of the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh has been given by Mr. Edward Thompson on the authority of Miles Irving, Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar. General Dyer, on his return from the Bagh, told Irving that he fired at first in order to drive the people out of the Bagh by exits which he supposed existed. Actually there was only one exit, near which Dyer and his men were stationed. The people rushed towards it to escape, and Dyer, believing that they were attacking him, continued to fire.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE NEW CONSTITUTION IN MADRAS

IN the beginning of April 1919 Lord Pentland's tenure of office expired. It had lasted six years and five months, longer than that of any preceding Governor since the days of General Munro. He left with warm expressions of personal esteem even from political opponents, an esteem which was shared equally by Lady Pentland, who is still, I am assured, remembered by Madras Indians as the English lady who most conspicuously exemplified the virtues which Indians specially desire in their women, by her devotion to her husband and children, the modesty which made her prefer to avoid limelight, and the humanitarian feeling which made her a vegetarian.

After a short and uneventful interval in which Sir Alexander Cardew held the office, Lord Willingdon succeeded as "Governor of Fort St. George." It was, I believe, a rare and perhaps an unprecedented thing for one who had served with great success as Governor of one of the three Presidencies to accept the same office in another province of only equal status, and Madras felt itself very fortunate and highly honoured by the appointment.

Lord and Lady Willingdon

In principles and aims during my time of service in Madras I saw no difference between Lord Pentland's and Lord Willingdon's administration. Each Governor, it seemed to me, aimed at serving the Empire by serving India, helping forward Indian education, sanitary improvement and industrial and political advance. "Constructive Statesmanship" is the phrase which seems to me the right one to describe their work. But the conditions under which that work was done were widely different.

There was much less similarity between Lady Pentland and Lady Willingdon. With the advent of Lady Willingdon's forceful personality, her *joie de vivre*, and powers of energetic initiative and organization, Government House changed markedly. That atmosphere of quiet domestic harmony which had so charmed Indians, but which Englishwomen had found, perhaps, a little

dull, was electrified. Little gatherings there were supplemented by large dinner parties at which European and Indian men and women sat down together at tables beneath which rows of electric bulbs shone to keep mosquitoes at bay; and similar gatherings of guests were invited to dances and balls. I think many Indian men found their conventional prejudices shocked to an uncomfortable degree,* but I think there is no doubt that their womenkind liked it; and Lady Willingdon at one stroke won great popularity with them by inviting them to a special party with no man present, either as guest or member of the household, a "gosha" party in Madras phrase, and throwing open all her wardrobes and dresses and jewels for their inspection. If she ever shocked, it was not for lack of understanding and tact, but because she considered that the shock would be wholesome.

One of her earliest steps was to organize a ladies' social club in Madras, as she had previously done in Bombay. A large bungalow with a large compound was taken for the purpose, and the whole surrounded by "tatties," structures some fifteen feet high built of bamboo rods and coconut matting, with a crooked entrance, so that no unauthorized person could see inside. It was situated at the beginning of "Commander-in-Chief's Road," and I passed by those tatties almost daily, without ever learning what sort of amusements the assembled ladies were enjoying, except that they were quiet ones. At another time I and my students had to clear out of our quarters in the Senate House, and get on as best we could in one or two rooms lent to us in a Government office, because Lady Willingdon wanted the whole building, except the Registrar's offices, for an exhibition of women's work.

It was in February 1921, on the eve of the first meeting of the Madras Legislative Council, that Government House reached the climax of its brilliance, in a great Fancy Dress Ball to celebrate the birth of the new Constitution. Lord and Lady Willingdon went as Charles I and Henrietta Maria; with grim humour my friend Arthur Davies went as "Put-not-your-trust-in-Princes

* One English lady who was a vegetarian for reasons of health told me that the Brahmin who sat next to her at one of these dinners said to her, "Is it not loathsome to see these people feeding on the corpses of murdered birds?" She looked across the table to where her husband was enjoying his partridge, and answered briefly, "No."

Jenkins," Charles I's executioner, and Mrs. Davies as Prudence Jenkins his wife. Each service was asked to select some particular period of Madras or World history, and arrange for enough dancers to come dressed accordingly to form a set of Lancers. The Government House staff made up the Court of King Charles set, the I.C.S., if I remember rightly, supplied the series which represented scenes in the history of Madras; the P.W.D. contingent came as ancient Egyptians, the Judicial service presented the Court of Constantinople in the time of Justinian, with Sir John Wallis as the Emperor, and Lady Wallis, the acknowledged beauty of Madras, in a gorgeously beautiful gown with all the colours of a peacock's plumage harmoniously blended together, as the Empress Theodora. The ball began with the arranged sets of Lancers, which occupied the floor of the ballroom and made a fine display for the other guests on the balconies, then dancing became general.

I was then living with Mr. J. T. Gwynn, the Madras Publicity Officer, in a bungalow in front of the sea beach at San Thomé. I invented half a dozen fancy costumes for him, but he would have none of them, stayed at home, and lent me his car to go by myself. The University Professors could not make up a set of Lancers, there being only three of us; and I believe my two colleagues stayed away. But there was one notable event in the history of Madras which had been passed over, and I decided to represent it. It was the martyrdom of the Apostle, Saint Thomas the Doubter, whose death on St. Thomas's Mount is recorded in an ancient picture in the Portuguese church on the summit. He is my favourite of all the saints in the Calendar. I turned a tussore dressing-gown inside out to serve as sackcloth, shaved off my moustache and smoothed down my hair away from the central bald area to look like a tonsure, and tied a ragged bit of rope around my waist. That gave, I thought, verisimilitude enough to allow me my usual foot clothing of shoes and three thin pairs of white socks to keep off mosquitoes, instead of showing the appropriate bare feet in sandals which might have meant an attack of malaria. Then I hung, in sandwich board fashion, silhouette drawings on white cardboard of the Mount, inscribed "Meus Mons," in front, and behind of the Saint kneeling in prayer while a Brahman is rushing towards him, and on the point of thrusting

a spear from behind into his body—"Quomodo mortuus sum." I expected everybody to recognize the legend, but found that I was kept busy explaining it. I do not know whether anyone perceived that my costume was a parable in dumb show, to enforce the doctrine that it is the movement of the spirit that matters most, and that the missionaries who first brought Christianity to India did something greater and more permanent than even the pioneers of the East India Company who laid the foundations of the British Raj.

The Madras Publicity Board

The Madras Publicity Office came into existence in September 1919. While the Bill based upon the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was before Parliament, the Government of India decided that in the excited state of India it was necessary to bring some new force to bear upon public opinion in order to give the reformed constitution a fair chance. Accordingly a chain of information bureaux was set up, more or less in accordance with the proposal put forward by Lord Pentland in 1914; a central bureau in Delhi or Simla, with an Imperial Publicity Officer at its head, and similar offices in each provincial centre. Mr. Rushbrook Williams was appointed to the former post; Madras was very fortunate in having Mr. J. T. Gwynn, of the well-known Dublin family, available. After serving for some years as a District Officer in Madras Presidency, his services had been lent to the British Admiralty for the period of the war. As an Irishman, with friends in both political camps, he could see the British Empire more objectively than most members of the I.C.S. and could appreciate better how Indians would react to Governmental propaganda; he had not long returned to India, and no other important task had been assigned to him. Accordingly he was offered the post, which in other provinces was called that of "Director of Publicity." He accepted, but only on condition that a non-official "Publicity Board" should be appointed to supervise the work. He thought the title "Director of Publicity" too pretentious, and took that of "Publicity Officer" instead.

The Publicity Board was constituted in September 1919. The Chairman was Rao-Bahadur T. Rangachariar, one of the Presidency representatives on the Imperial Legislative Assembly; the

other members were mostly Hindus, with a few Mahomedans and Europeans, including myself.

The meetings of the Board were frequent, and every important matter was put before them. Its proceedings were singularly harmonious. I do not remember any occasion on which there was within it any substantial difference of opinion, or on which its opinion was in conflict with Gwynn's; sometimes he merely stated the alternatives and left the decision to the Committee without making a definite recommendation. With its backing he was able to take up an independent line of action, since the Madras Government naturally accepted without demur the proposals endorsed by the advisers which it had itself selected. We might not agree as well with the Imperial Government. For example, there was a short period when the price of silver had risen too fast for the rupee to keep pace with it, and it became profitable to melt down rupees. An Ordinance was issued to forbid this practice, and we got from Delhi letters urging us to give maximum publicity to it, and to the fact that the turning of rupees into ornaments had suddenly become sinful and a crime. At the meeting of the Committee I argued that the Ordinance itself was a blunder, and that the Indian people, who had never given up their practice of turning their savings into ornaments, and using the persons of their womenkind as savings banks, even when they could only do so at a considerable loss, were not going to be prevented from continuing it when it appeared to be profitable. The only result of the propaganda which we were asked to undertake would be to make people hurry to melt down rupees when it would not otherwise have occurred to them to do so. The Committee agreed with me, and we advised that no action should be taken. The Ordinance was withdrawn not long afterwards.

The other provincial publicity offices gave out, so far as I could discover, little more than echoes of the pro-Government propaganda emitted from Delhi; Gwynn turned that of Madras into a great organization for adult education.

An office was found for him on the ground-floor of a great bungalow known to the Post Office as 2 Victoria Crescent, which also abutted on Commander-in-Chief's Road, and I think it must originally have been the official residence of the Commander in Company days. Here was installed a small staff of clerks, and

a corps of translators into the various vernaculars was enlisted. Routine work consisted in supplying copies of authorized reports of the speeches of the Viceroy and Governor and other official pronouncements and information to all the newspapers in the Presidency. Besides this the reading public was approached directly. All who desired to get into touch with the Publicity Office were invited to become its "Honorary Correspondents," and to forward to it any local information which they wished to communicate, while they received by post one copy each in English of all its publications, together with several copies in their local vernaculars, which they were expected to pass on to their neighbours with explanations if necessary. This invitation was so widely welcomed that when Gwynn went on long leave in April 1921, after little more than eighteen months of publicity work, over 20,000 honorary correspondents had been enrolled, and the number continued to increase afterwards. In a letter home I noted that in August 1921 we sent out half a million leaflets in 105,000 packages.

So far as I can remember not a single leaflet of pro-Government propaganda was sent out by Gwynn. He began by issuing precise information about the new Constitution, how the Madras Legislative Council and the Imperial Legislative Assembly and Council of State were to be constituted, and what their powers were, who could be nominated, who could vote, and how the voting was to be done. When that task had been accomplished, he set to work to supply his growing number of correspondents with reliable information about matters affecting their daily lives, mainly in the form of tracts dealing with improvements in agricultural practice, and with the preservation of health and cure and avoidance of prevalent diseases. These were specially written for him by experts in the Agricultural and Medical Services. Some that specially interested me when written, and which in consequence I still remember, treated of the supplies of fish manure available and its uses; Bright's disease, the great curse of the elderly Brahman, and how to keep it at bay without departing from the vegetarian diet imposed by Hindu religion; and the life history of the parasite which causes elephantiasis. Gandhi had declared that British rule was Satanic; Gwynn made no direct reply to the accusation, but what he did was calculated, I thought, to make Madrasis sceptical

about its accuracy. If it were Satanic, would it be so keen about the health and prosperity of the people?

Shortly before he left he wrote a tract entitled *The Motor-Car*, a parable with a political moral. In it a family which owned a car employed a professional chauffeur, but when they saw the Jap rushing past on his motor-bicycle, they were dissatisfied with the speed their man got out of the car, resolved to drive it themselves, and gave the chauffeur notice. He argued with them, pointing out that at least he made the car go faster than the big Chinese family coach and that greater speed would be dangerous, and when they persisted said, "At least let me stop long enough to teach you how to drive it and keep it in order." He did not publish this in Madras, but sent a copy to the Central Publicity Office, which accepted it eagerly.

In two very interesting tracts Gwynn told the story of the Chenchus, a wild jungle tribe who made their living chiefly by raiding the settlements of their neighbours, and who used with great skill bows even more powerful than those that won the battles of Crécy and Poitiers. The task of "civilizing" them was first undertaken, with the approval of the Government, by the Salvation Army, who have in many instances been extraordinarily successful in dealing with criminal castes and tribes. But with the Chenchus they failed completely, and the task of subduing them had to be taken over by the military. The campaign was conducted under conditions of very great difficulty, owing to the density of the forests in which the Chenchus lived, and the virulence of the local type of malaria to which none but they had become even partially immune. It was finally accomplished by the aid of "tame Chenchus" who had taken up other means than brigandage of getting a living. I have since seen it stated that since their habits were civilized their physique has much deteriorated.

A Non-Brahmin Ministry

In January 1921 the arrangements for initiating the new Constitution having been completed, H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught came out to India to inaugurate the proceedings of the Legislative Councils, landing in Bombay on the 17th. It had been intended that the Prince of Wales should come, but the King had not consented. The Councils had a large majority of elected

members, to whom the Governors of the Provinces added a few officials to act as spokesmen for their respective departments, and a few non-officials to represent sections of the population which otherwise would not secure representation, notably in Madras the Adi-Dravidas, also exponents of points of view that might not else get a hearing. I was one of those whom Lord Willingdon nominated. Some of my Indian friends condoled with me because members of the Council previously had been entitled to put "The Hon'ble" before their names; all that they were now allowed to write was "M.L.C." after them, but that, they thought, was better than nothing.

The Council met for the first time on February 14th, and the Duke gave his address. His tall and dignified presence, the friendliness of his manner, and the warmth and sincerity with which he spoke, made a strong and completely favourable impression of great value in view of the storms which were gathering round.

Already before the elections the Indian National Congress had adopted the policy of non-co-operation, and had urged the boycotting of the elections. As yet the non-co-operation movement had made little progress in Madras Presidency, which was much more concerned about its own political issues, and the only perceptible result of this appeal was to prevent non-co-operators from being nominated for the Legislative Council, which added to the harmony of the proceedings without preventing it from fairly representing public opinion.

The "Justice" or "Non-Brahmin" party, which had been so afraid that the Reforms would strengthen Brahmin domination, finding its demand for communal representation rejected, set to work to organize an energetic electoral campaign, with such success that it captured a large majority of the seats, especially in the Telugu-speaking area. The Telugus outnumbered the Tamils, but because the Tamils were educationally far in advance of the Telugus, Tamil Brahmins greatly predominated in the Government services, thereby exciting considerable jealousy. In consequence, at the time of the first election the Brahmin party over all the northern part of the Presidency was regarded as a pro-Tamil party, and the Justice party as the Andhra party; and it was largely to this circumstance that the latter owed its victory.

In these circumstances Lord Willingdon was able to apply the principles of British Parliamentarism, and he approached the leader of the victorious party. Dr. Nair's health and strength were failing, and he was not able to accept office for himself, but he suggested three of his colleagues, and they became the Ministers to take office and serve on the Governor's Council with Sir Lionel Davidson and Sir Charles Todhunter.

One of the appointed Ministers invited me to his house in order to explain to me his views on the main political issue of the day. He said that he was as strongly nationalist at heart as any other Indian, but he feared that the premature ending of British rule would bring ruin. He said, in effect, "If the Hindus, who are the great majority, were as well fitted in other respects for conflict as the Mahomedans, or if the Mahomedans had the majority, I should not be afraid of independence. Actually the two sections are as nearly as possible of equal strength. The Mahomedans have three great advantages. Firstly they are united, by their religion every Moslem is a brother to every other one; we are hopelessly divided. If a Paraiyan, a fellow Hindu, were to cross this floor, we should have to regard it as worse polluted than it might be by a dog or pig, and have to cleanse it more elaborately. Secondly, Mahomedanism is a fighting religion; ours teaches peacefulness and acquiescence. Lastly, the Mahomedans have two areas which can serve them as military bases, Afghanistan in the north and Hyderabad State in the south. The conflict therefore would be long and even, and would not cease till India was completely ruined."

In expressing these opinions I think he reflected pretty accurately the views of his party.

As for the Brahmins who were elected, they were largely men of ability and experience, who had won general respect by their services on the old Council and in local affairs. Their leaders were M. Ramachandra Rao and S. Srinivasa Aiyangar. It would be hard to find anywhere a Parliamentary Opposition freer from excess of party feeling or more purely public-spirited, and man for man they showed a marked superiority to their opponents. It would, I think, have gone badly with the majority party if a new man of organizing ability had not come forward to take Dr. Nair's place, in the person of Mr. (Sir) A. P. Patro, who has been

mentioned above. He collected the new and inexperienced men of whom his party chiefly consisted in party meetings for the preliminary discussion of the matters which were to come before the Council, and infused something of a team spirit into them. Before long he entered the Government as Minister for Education, the man first appointed having to resign on account of the unfortunate condition of his private affairs.

The office of President, corresponding to that of Speaker in the House of Commons, was filled by Sir P. Rajagopalachariar. The seats were arranged on the same plan as in Westminster, with the majority party on the right and the Opposition on the left. My own seat was on the back benches of the Opposition side of the House, with those of other nominated non-official members.

On the question of procedure it was voted, in the first place, that speeches ordinarily should be limited to fifteen minutes; after a while it was felt by many that this left too much scope for verbosity, and by a small majority we reduced the time limit to ten minutes. We met in the morning, adjourned for an hour at midday for tiffin, and usually finished our business in time to get home by daylight.

In a letter home written on September 1, 1921, during a meeting of the Council, I read this passage: "It is now 11.45, and we have been going through our agenda speedily. We have (1) got through 80 pp. of questions and answers, (2) listened to an address from His Excellency on the state of the Presidency, and (3) nearly completed all stages in the passing of the Madras District Municipalities Act"—all that morning's work.

For the initial elections the franchise was confined to men, but the Councils were authorized to extend it by resolution to women also on the same terms. The Madras Council was the first to consider the question. The debate occupied one afternoon sitting, and the resolution to admit women was carried by a three to one majority. Subsequently the same resolution was carried in Bombay after a two days' debate by a small majority; in no other Indian Province had it any chance of success. I think there was only one in which the question was raised at all. This illustrates again the difference in mental outlook between the South and the North which caused Madras to be regarded as "The Benighted

Presidency." But in Burma it was assumed as a matter of course that women must have the same political rights as men, and this was provided for from the beginning.

The successful start of the new Constitution in Madras was much assisted by the fact that the financial readjustment that accompanied it allowed for increased spending power to the extent of two crores of rupees—at present exchange rates £1,500,000. On the other hand prices had risen far above pre-war rates, and a revision of the salaries of the lower ranks of the Government service had become urgently necessary. "A Salaries Committee" to draw up a scheme of revision, on which I served, was therefore appointed immediately. Its discussions were quickly cut short. The clerks concerned had put forward their own demand, and the Council, feeling that action must be taken immediately, accepted it. It was that the minimum salary for any Government clerk should be Rs.35* per month (12s. 3d. per week), not too much, it was felt, for young men who had in many cases exhausted their available family resources in getting a University education, and then had only been able to complete it by marrying and devoting their wives' dowries to the same purpose. I was interested in observing that in the discussions on the Committee it was assumed as a matter of course that all clerks would be married, and that they would more often have to contribute to the maintenance of the families to which they belonged than to receive help from them.

The question of subsequent salary advances was left over. I wanted it to be gone into, but it was relatively difficult, and no definite demands had been put forward. The price-level began to fall a little during the later part of the year, and that eased the situation.

The five years of my appointment to the University terminated early in December 1920. I had reason to believe that the Syndicate intended to offer me a second term of five years with the expectation that I would accept it. Actually I was anxious for various reasons to return home when winter was over. Accordingly I notified the Syndicate in good time that I would accept only a

* The retail price of rice enough to feed a man and woman then amounted to about Rs.16 per month, apart from that of other necessary food, and all other expenses.

six months' extension, which would have been three months' term and three months' vacation, and the University agreed to this arrangement. But Gwynn also had urgent family reasons for wanting to go home. He applied for the long leave to which he was entitled, and recommended that I should be asked to act as his deputy from April 1920 to March 1921. The appointment was offered me and I accepted it. The work appealed to me greatly, and the prospect of having to do no University lecturing for a whole year was most inviting.

A Personal Digression

My wife, who had failed to get a passage when she applied for it in 1919, succeeded in getting one at the end of September 1920, by insisting on interviewing the Head of the P. and O. office in his own room. She landed in Bombay on October 15th, the Madras official day for the breaking of the north-east monsoon. Owing to unrest in the Indian railway and postal services she had to wait on board for some hours after all other passengers had left, uncertain whether I should be able to keep my promise to meet her, but fortunately did not give up hope. We had a terrifically hot journey to Madras, but the monsoon soon brought its usual downpour, and November was as usual wet, sodden and chilly, with no fires to dry and comfort one. We got lodgings in a bungalow just taken by a newly wedded couple, but had to get our meals in the ladies' annexe of the Madras Club, half a mile away. My wife's coming brought me into closer contact than before with the delightful household of the Deaconesses of St. Faith's Mission to Anglo-Indians on the one hand, and on the other with the Theosophical community at Adyar, where we found much to admire. I saw enough of Mrs. Besant to be assured of the genuineness of her desire to serve India. She was endeavouring to help India to advance culturally along its own lines, though she had been too ready to act as though its political advance must be on those of Whig political theory.

For the Christmas vacation I had two engagements in the north of India; a Committee on the methods to be adopted in working out Index Numbers for variations in the cost of living in Delhi, and the annual meeting of the Indian Economic Association in Allahabad. We determined, therefore, to make an extended

tour, going by the Western route and returning by the Eastern. We went first to Bombay, and visited the caves of Elephanta, thence to Ajmere, by the kind invitation of the Rev. Mr. Carstairs, where the conditions of life seemed to be like those of Palestine in the time of Jesus, with camels and goats lounging along narrow dusty streets. There we visited mosques and an admirable missionary women's hospital, and made the acquaintance of the staff. Our next halt was at Udaipur, with its lake and marble palaces, much described by many writers, though beyond adequate description. We were lucky in getting on the boat which every evening carried two men with great sacks of grain to a tower on the opposite side, to go with them to the top while a great herd of wild boars and flocks of peacocks and peahens gathered round for the grain that was thrown out to them.

Agra came next, where my wife had a cousin in the meteorological service, hard at work on the devising of delicate instruments for automatically recording temperatures, humidity and wind pressure at various high altitudes, and securing the recovery and return to the office of those instruments when they were automatically released from the balloons which carried them. From Agra we visited Fatehpur Sikri and the Taj, and saw the other regular tourist sights till I was fed up with the multiplicity of the marble memorials of the era of the Great Moguls. Then we made a dash on the much over-praised Simla, where we had snow showers, fires in the bedroom, and the pleasure of witnessing a great children's party given by the hotel. Thence to Delhi, where my time was pretty completely occupied with the work of the Committee, and to Allahabad, where it was equally taken up with the business of the Economic Association. We did, however, visit the great Mosque at Delhi and drive out to the vast Government building of New Delhi, which had then reached first-floor level and gave extensive views in all directions. In Allahabad we went to the sacred spot where the Ganges and Jumna meet, and there we found pilgrims already beginning to assemble. In Calcutta we came in contact again with women-missionary work, and our hostesses gave us a most instructive afternoon by taking us first to the Calcutta Races and then to Kalighat.

It was on our return from this tour that I received the notification of my nomination to the Legislative Council.

When the University session ended in March 1921, we bade farewell to my students, who on their side evinced all the kind friendliness and warm appreciation which Indians are so ready to show to those who meet them half-way. My wife had for her return a passage from Colombo, so that we were able to spend a day or two in Ceylon, and visit Kandy, a place of singular charm and interest.

The Ramachandra Water Lift

Before giving up my University appointment I tried, in two directions, to do something to increase Indian economic resources. I came across an account of the great value to Madagascar of the large bean sold in England as "butter beans," and entitled in full "the golden butter bean of Madagascar." I had some sent out to me from London, and put a letter in the papers to say that I would forward a few to any applicant who would undertake to plant them and let me know whether they were a success. A good many people took them up, and reported that they grew vigorously, especially if provided with supports to climb over, like our runner beans, and that eaten green like our green peas they were a very agreeable vegetable. But the only grower that to my knowledge followed my request to let some of them ripen and use them as seed was the Bombay Agricultural College in Poona.

My other effort was to secure official recognition of the work of Mr. S. Ramachandra Iyer. He had started his career in the Madras Agricultural Department, but with his original and inventive bent of mind found the conditions of work in a Government service too distasteful, and retired to embark on an independent career. His departure was resented, and his old colleagues, as it seemed to me, were jealously unwilling to give him the assistance to which he was rightly entitled.

The special invention which he was pressing most eagerly was the "Ramachandra Lift," a modification of the usual South Indian type of water lift by means of the *Kabalai*. The difference was in the way in which the bullocks who drew the water did their work. In the ancient and prevailing fashion they are harnessed with their tails towards the well; they work on an inclined plane (a "ramp") which slopes downwards from the edge of the well, using their weight as well as the strength of their legs to

draw up the full buckets, and then are backed up the ramp to the well again. The work wears them out quickly, and Ramachandra believed that it was backing up the ramp which caused the damage, and devised a plan for enabling them to work always forwards instead of alternately forwards and backwards. This consisted in making the ramp steeper and laying down on it little lines of rails carrying a small wheeled platform. The ox was harnessed to face the well, marched up the ramp while the weight of the descending bucket drew up the platform, then stepped on it with his driver, and rested there while the combined weight of ox, platform and driver pulled up the full bucket—which, it will be remembered, fills and empties itself automatically.

He was allowed to give a demonstration in the Madras Agricultural College at Coimbatore, and the necessary structure to support the pulleys in which the ropes of the Kabalai worked was built for him. A number of the chief officers of the service attended to see the test, which was fixed for the afternoon. At a preliminary private trial in the morning all went well; but when the public trial began the wooden structure broke down, to Ramachandra's astonishment and dismay. It could not be repaired in time, so the test had to be abandoned. I could see that Ramachandra suspected that the breakdown had been purposely contrived during the midday meal-time.

I brought him to the University to lecture to my students, and one of them who owned a large compound with two wells in it fitted them up with the Ramachandra Lift. Then, as it seemed to be the only possible way of getting past the obstacle in the Agricultural Department, I got Lord Willingdon to accept an invitation to witness a demonstration. One big ox worked one lift, a fine buffalo the other, and both seemed to enjoy the downhill ride on their respective platforms, and got on and off so spontaneously that it looked almost as though they could be trusted to do their work without the interposition of a driver. Lord Willingdon was evidently impressed, and not long afterwards I heard that Ramachandra had entered into an agreement with Messrs. Best & Co. by which they were to assist in fitting up the lift for the landed proprietors whom Ramachandra persuaded to adopt it.

The only other places where I saw it working were on the

lands of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, where it was found, they told me, thoroughly satisfactory, and in Ramachandra's own compound which was devoted to the trying out of his inventions. Here the lift was worked by a cow who supplied the household with milk, and by an hour or two of healthful exercise daily irrigated a little patch of land which supplied her amply with fodder, since she also manured it. Ramachandra pointed out that seeing the water-level in Madras City is everywhere very near the surface,* dairying on his lines would solve the problem of milk supply. He had a number of ingenious gadgets to show, and also a plough of his own invention—a true plough, which cut underneath the sod and turned it over (whereas the Indian ploughs only make scratches on the surface), but which seemed also to have solved the problem of attaining sufficient lightness of draught to suit Indian conditions.

During the first quarter of 1921 my wife and I, on our return from our northern tour, went to live with Gwynn in a little bungalow in a big compound entitled "Bishop's Gardens" on the north side of the River Adyar, which contained also a big bungalow occupied by a chummery of six men, of whom I knew only Mr. R. W. Brock, then the editor of the *Madras Times*. Bishop's Gardens was some miles away from the Senate House, where my work was, though within the City boundary; but the road which followed the shore was very pleasant, and I had bought a motor-bicycle and side-car.

My wife's return home in April took place at the same time as Gwynn's departure on long leave, and on returning to Madras after seeing her off, I installed myself in his office in the old bungalow already described. I was very fortunate in being taken in as a paying guest by the Rev. W. E. H. Organe and his wife, who occupied the bungalow on the opposite side of the Crescent, with a large compound reaching down to the bank of the River

* This high water-level is a great obstacle to the making of Madras into a healthy city. When a house is built it is necessary, or at least customary, to dig out a tank and pile the earth on an adjoining spot for the foundations. The tank is fitted with some sort of water lift for watering the garden. It speedily becomes a breeding-place for malaria-carrying mosquitoes. The American plan of covering the surface of the water with a film of petroleum has been tried and found worse than useless. The best remedy is to introduce larvicultural fish, which the Fisheries Department supplies.



FATEHPUR SIKRI, CORNER OF MOSQUE WHERE AKBAR
TRANCED



FATEHPUR SIKRI, CENTRAL COURTYARD, TOMB OF THE HINDU
SAINT CHISHTI

Cocum. Organe was the local representative of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and we also had living with us the Madras Electrical Engineer, Mr. Henshaw. Here I lived with good friends during the remainder of my service in India, from April 1921 to March 1922, in which I had to divide my time between the work of the Publicity Office and that of the Legislative Council.

CHAPTER XXIX

LABOUR TROUBLES

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-ONE was a critical and stormy year. Not only did the Non-Co-operation Movement initiated by Gandhi and the Khilafat Movement of the Ali brothers invade Madras Presidency, and take strong hold, the former of Guntur and neighbouring districts in the east, and the latter of Malabar on the west, but Madras City itself was the scene of a fierce labour conflict. To explain this last issue it is necessary to go back to the beginnings of industrial labour organization in India.

Labour unrest first began to show itself actively in 1918, when political anti-Government propaganda was active, and rising prices unaccompanied by corresponding increases of wages caused discontent. Strikes broke out in the majority of the districts of the Presidency, but, being unorganized and severely discouraged by the Government as a hindrance to the prosecution of the war, failed to achieve success. At this time Mr. B. P. Wadia, a Parsi from Bombay, who had joined the staff of *New India*, secured a somewhat reluctant permission from Mrs. Besant to take up the work of organizing the cotton operatives into a Trade Union. In April 1918 he formed the "Madras Labour Union," the first Trade Union in India. But he gathered his members from the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills alone, leaving the Choolai mill, Indian owned and managed, undisturbed, although the conditions there were notoriously worse. Accordingly Messrs. Binny & Co., the Managing Agents, took up a hostile attitude, and the workers were beaten in the resulting struggle. Nevertheless the Union lived and grew.

When in 1919 the effects of scarcity were felt, relations between the mill managers and their workers improved, as Messrs. Binny spontaneously increased wages to meet the increased cost of living; but the great post-armistice price boom strained the relations between employers and employed generally. Large advances of wages were necessary to meet the great increase in the cost of living; employers at the time were fully able to grant them, but

reluctant to do so, as they rightly supposed it would be difficult to reduce them when the inevitable slump came.

From a letter home dated July 21, 1920, I take the following extracts:

[In April] "there was a tramway strike, which resulted in an average increase of wages of 25 per cent—about as much as the Company, which is not prosperous, can pay, according to its own belief. If they paid more wages they would have to put up fares, and this, they think, would lead to fewer people travelling. I think they are wrong there, and that the general increase of money incomes would make an increase of fares possible. However, they don't think so. When this settlement was reached, the Electrical Company, which is really under the same management, though not so nominally, gave its employees a corresponding increase of wages. Simpson, the acting boss of both companies, the chief resident partner of Binny & Co., is a pretty decent sort of man, with a sense of justice. Unfortunately this unasked-for boon made the electrical workers say to themselves, 'If we got this by a strike of the tramway men, in which we did not take part, should we not get much more by a strike of our own?' Arundale, Mrs. Besant's factotum, who, in the absence of Wadia, the original organizer of Madras Trade Unionism, is carrying on Wadia's job, addressed a meeting of the electrical men and said that he hoped the stream of money which was coming to them from the employers in a trickle would shortly become a flood. So the electrical men formulated a set of demands which were referred to arbitration—one arbitrator for the men, one for the company, and a third to compose differences. The arbitrators recommended some small concessions, but rejected the main demands. Simpson accepted the award, the men struck, suddenly leaving work at 1.30 p.m. with the fires blazing away in the furnaces. Simpson's blood was up. He got a telephone message at his office in George Town immediately, and by 2 p.m. he had fifty coolies at the power station, rushed down in a motor lorry, and the danger of a big explosion was averted. In another half-hour he had a second fifty coolies there, and shortly afterwards he got hold of a lot of demobilized artisans returned from Mesopotamia. The electrical supply was maintained, and while a few of the strikers have been taken back, the great majority have

permanently lost their jobs. Arundale resigned all connection with the Union when it resolved to strike instead of accepting the arbitrators' award, which prudent action Simpson regards as a mean betrayal of his dupes.

"About the same time another federated group of firms was attacked. All over the two railway systems of South India, the M. & S.M.R.* and S.I.R.,* the refreshment catering is in the hands of Spencer & Co., which also has shops in Madras, Bangalore and other places, runs three hotels in Madras and about three or four elsewhere. Spencer & Co. is practically amalgamated with Higginbotham's, who run the railway book-stalls of South India and have shops, and with Oakes & Co. who sell motors and miscellaneous goods, and have the largest private engineering works in South India, employing about 1,000. These engineering men struck and Oakes & Co. promptly closed the works, and kept them closed, until at a stormy meeting the men threw over their advisers and went to work in a body. At the same time the men employed by Spencer & Co. in a small repair workshop struck. This was being carried on at a loss, so Spencer & Co. closed it permanently.

"Simpson gave me some interesting particulars about the results of concessions to the mill hands. They were given (negotiation without strike) a reduction of hours to fifty-eight per week (ten-hour day), and an increase of about 25 per cent in wages. As a consequence of the reduction of hours the output has increased; as a consequence of the increase of pay average earnings have scarcely increased, as the percentage of absenteeism has gone up from 6 per cent to 25 per cent. At present the men prefer more leisure to a larger income. This does not affect the working of the mills much, it means that there is a larger number of extra hands employed to make up for absence of regular ones.

"There is still a big struggle going on in the printing industry. There has been a strike in the S.P.C.K. Press, which does all the printing for the University. I don't know the rights and wrongs of it, but I know the manager was anxious that there should be a properly organized printing Trade Union which would level up the wages paid by *all* firms. This strike put the University in a difficulty, and it applied for, and obtained, permission to get its

* Madras and Southern Mahratta and South Indian Railways.

printing done in the Government Press. Thereupon the Government Press men struck in sympathy. The Government Press had had its own difficulties. I for one had long back been pointing out that their wage conditions ought to be revised, and the Government appointed a Committee to go into the matter, but there was so much procrastination that at last the printers lost patience and struck. Then the Government gave them some account of the proposed alterations and they went back, and Government saved its face, after a fashion, by holding back the detailed statement of the new conditions till after the men returned to work. But of course the men took it that they had scored a victory by striking, and were predisposed to strike again. This time the result is likely to be disastrous. The very heavy cost of paper tends to cut down the amount of printing to be done, and the *Madras Times* alone has reduced its staff by forty odd compositors, and may be expected to reduce again, so that strikers in the printing trade are likely to be in for a long period of unemployment. Perhaps the worst feature of the situation is that owing to their lack of education and their acute consciousness of this lack, the Madras manual workers rely upon outside leadership, and the people who come forward to advise and lead them are much more animated by racial feeling than by desire to help the manual worker. Hence they take care that all the strikes are against firms under European management, i.e. against the firms that pay the best wages and give the best conditions. The European employer has *some* notion that the people employed by a prosperous firm ought to share in some degree in its prosperity; the Indian employer, as a rule, tries to drive the hardest bargain he can with everybody he does business with, especially the most helpless coolies."

The Labour Commissioner

In these circumstances the Madras Government in January 1920 created the office of "Labour Commissioner," and appointed Paddison, whose work in Madura has already been described. He had no powers beyond those supplied by his own personality, and the prestige of being the representative of the Government. He had an office on the first floor of the bungalow the ground-floor of which was occupied by the Publicity Office, and consequently

had Gwynn at first, and myself afterwards, as his immediate neighbours.

Paddison's method was to intervene as quickly as possible when a strike was threatened, make a personal investigation into the merits of the case, form his own opinion of the terms on which the dispute should be settled, talk to the operatives and win their consent, and then tackle the employers. The results were remarkable. The official record for 1920 is that there were sixty-two strikes in the Presidency of which fifty were successful. As for the number of cases in which he secured a settlement of the dispute before there was any stoppage of work, I have no figures.

He was extraordinarily successful in winning the confidence of the workers, and in dealing with British and Indian employers he had usually little difficulty. But the Standard Oil Company was also a large employer of labour in Madras, and its American staff had all the "sturdy individualism" of the American tradition, and strongly objected to any outside interference between it and its workers. In dealing with them Paddison had to bring into play all his resources. He invited the staff to dine with him in Madras Club. They were, like most Americans living abroad in Prohibition days, thirsty souls, and he wined them liberally, and did not let them go till in the small hours of the morning he had got them to consent to his terms. I think he got their signatures, as, so far as I could gather, he was the only one of the party who had a clear recollection of the proceedings. This, however, was not final, the dispute was renewed not long afterwards, and this time Paddison had to play his last trump by asking Lord Willingdon to intervene in person. This was successful, but Madras officials shuddered at the thought of the damage to Government prestige if it had failed.

Not long after I took up the Publicity work Paddison went on long leave, much to my regret. There was a delightful farewell entertainment in the office organized by the Indian members of his staff, and attended also by Mrs. Paddison and her children, two bright boys who were great favourites. One feature that specially interested me was the traditional *kolattam*, a feature of all Tamil village festivals, closely resembling our Morris dances. Mr. T. E. Moir, I.C.S., took Paddison's place. The sky then

seemed clear, so far as labour disputes were concerned, but soon became really stormy.

The Cotton-Mill Strike

I had got a clue to the inner meaning of the issues then raised some time previously. As part of his publicity work Gwynn arranged public lectures and discussions on matters of importance at the moment, usually in the very centrally situated premises of the Y.M.C.A. All comers and the Press were invited, and in one or two cases the influence of these meetings on public opinion was important. One such discussion was on the question whether Madras should imitate Bombay by passing a law for rent control, which we deprecated; another on the probable result of the great gambling boom in the shares of the Tata Industrial Bank, which we rightly anticipated would resemble the South Sea Company Bubble in its final result. At one of these meetings Gwynn got Mr. B. P. Wadia to lecture on the Labour question in Madras.

His lecture made it clear that he had formed his ideas of Trade Union policy by a study of Mr. G. D. H. Cole's *The World of Labour*, and had adopted the Syndicalist doctrine that the aim of Trade Unions should be not merely to improve the conditions of labour by collective bargaining with capitalist employers, but to get rid of them altogether and substitute workers' control of the working of industrial units, a doctrine which seemed to me premature in Madras, whatever its merits might be elsewhere. He fully admitted the superior advantages enjoyed by members of his Union working in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, but said that these constituted fetters on the limbs of the workers, golden fetters, but fetters none the less.

Some time afterwards he found an opportunity for raising the issue of workers' control. A foreman's place in the Carnatic Mill became vacant; the Union demanded the right of appointing his successor. When Binny & Co. made their own choice, the man chosen refused the office, acting on the instructions of the Union. He was discharged and a second man appointed, with the same result; then a third also. Work stopped, but not for very long. Wadia, for some reason or other, was anxious to leave Madras, and made a settlement with Messrs. Binny & Co., but in his haste failed to get the terms similarly understood on both sides.

The operatives believed that the mill managers had agreed to reinstate the three men who had refused appointment as foremen, whereas the managers declared that no such stipulation had been made. After a good deal of wrangling the Carnatic operatives came out on strike in June. Naturally there were other troubles besides the issue of the appointment of foremen. My account written at the time reads as follows:

The two big cotton mills, Buckingham and Carnatic, have had a lot of disputing. The operatives are better treated than in any other mill in India, or than any other large lot of workers in Madras, but they are also disciplined—compelled to be clean and use the latrines instead of the floors and to be punctual. Hence they are disposed to be restive. The Carnatic Mill went on strike for what appear to be frivolous reasons, the real grievance apparently being that after the last wages settlement, which brought wages up to 135 per cent above pre-war rates (prices are about 60 per cent above pre-war, now that they have fallen a bit), the European staff have had increases.

I have no note of the exact date when this strike began, but it must have been in June 1921. Paddison had gone. Towards the end of that month the Carnatic men appealed to those in the Buckingham Mill to strike in sympathy. The Union executive—or part of it—came to the Labour Commissioner's office to interview Mr. Moir; he tried to dissuade them from striking, but failed. As they came downstairs, Moir's chief assistant, who had previously served under Paddison, persuaded them to stop and have a talk with me.

The leader, the only man in the group who appeared to speak and understand English, was a Brahmin employed in the accounting office. He brought with him statistics with regard to the wages cost of different manufacturing processes, and the total margin between prime costs and prices realized, to show how great were the advances in wages that the firms could afford to grant. I told him that I should not be able to examine or understand his figures, but I had no doubt that the mills could pay much more; and I should be glad if the operatives could get further increases. But the Union had not raised that issue, but instead one of principle, the principle of workers' control, and on that the employers would never give in. I said "the mills can be shut up for eighteen months

and still continue to pay their regular dividends, and the managers will do it rather than yield." He looked shaken. While we were talking the other members gazed, rather pathetically, at our faces, as though trying to see in them the tenor of our words. If they had understood I think I should have convinced them. But apparently the leader supposed that I had been exaggerating. The Union called out the Buckingham operatives, and all the Mahomedans and caste Hindus struck work.

Then came the most notable feature of the struggle. There were in the Buckingham Mill, out of nearly 6,000 operatives, about a thousand of the untouchable castes, mostly Paraiyans. They held a separate meeting to decide whether they would come out with the others. I got an account of it next day from an eye-witness. At the critical moment one man got up and said, "Whoever did anything for us except the British Government and the British capitalist? I say, let us stand by the employers!" Applause. But a voice from the crowd, "What will the Mahomedans do to us then?" Another man sprang up. "Our ancestors fought with Clive, our ancestors helped to put down the Mutiny. Shall we now be afraid of these Mahomedans?" Great applause. The resolution to stand by the employers was carried with enthusiasm.

The Mahomedan strikers reacted to this defiance according to expectation. The Madras Paraiyans live together in little clusters of huts called "parcheries," i.e. Paraiyan villages, which are built after the ancient Tamil custom of sticks interwoven with palm leaves—very inflammable of course. On one of the first days of the strike some of the strikers, generally supposed to be adherents of the fighting religion of Islam, visited two of these parcheries while their occupants were in the mill working, and in one burnt down ninety huts and in the other fifty-two. The police and fire brigade arrived too late to prevent the damage, but in time to restrain the Paraiyans who came pouring out of the mill, seizing anything that they came across which would serve as a weapon, eager to fight the matter out. The struggle widened. In a letter dated July 5th I wrote, "We are having on an average three fires a day. Two policemen have been shot. . . . We cannot get either mutton or beef, as the butchers, who are untouchable, have been burnt out of their homes. . . . Mrs. Organe was very pleased because she had bought four ducks. She housed them in a shed

in the compound, but a mongoose got in at night and killed them all, and there was only one carcase that we could eat."

As the police force was insufficient to provide protection from fire for the scattered parcheries, or insufficiently sympathetic to their inmates, being themselves Mahomedans or caste Hindus, the non-strikers were removed and housed in two adjoining bungalows with good-sized compounds which happened to be empty. I went with Moir to help supervise the settling in. The Paraiyans were very excited and eager to retaliate, and had to be warned severely against taking up the offensive. If any apparent enemies had appeared, I am sure that we should have been quite unable to prevent them from rushing to the attack. I went again to see them on the Sunday—July 1st I think—and found they had settled down very happily. They had special cause that morning for cheerfulness, as a man who was taking a cartload of beef to the market, finding no stall-keepers there to buy it, brought it to this Camp of Refuge, cut it up and distributed it gratis.

Month after month the strike went on. Fires were so frequent that we got into the habit of looking out at sunset to see where they had broken out. The Paraiyan "blacklegs" were not to be cowed, and their numbers increased, until, if I remember correctly, there were three thousand at work, daily marching to and from the mill under police protection, and there seemed to be no disposition on either side to compromise. I had a sort of faint hope that I might help. I wrote to Messrs. Binny & Co. and to the Labour Union, saying to each that if they would tell me in strict confidence what their minimum terms were, I would let them know if there was any hope of an agreement being reached if negotiations were opened. I pledged myself that the terms mentioned should neither be reported to the other side, nor even hinted at. Messrs. Binny replied that they would be ready to meet the strikers if they wished to negotiate; the Union that their minimum terms were reinstatement with full wages for all the time they had been on strike, together with full payment of the bonuses given for regular attendance, punctuality and good work. I could only answer that a settlement on anything like that basis was hopeless.

At last on October 27th I could report home that the strike had ended after four months of bitter strife. The end came sud-

denly and dramatically. It was known that Gandhi was making a second visit to Madras. On the very day of his arrival a mob of strikers armed with empty and broken bottles attacked the police who were guarding the men at work, wounded several and killed one. In the evening they met Gandhi. What he said to them has, so far as I know, never been revealed. But next day they surrendered at discretion. They were taken back on condition of working amicably with the non-strikers, none of whom was discharged. There was room for all who had remained in Madras, but of those who had gone back to their native villages many lost their jobs permanently, with no hope of ever getting equally remunerative work again.

The Mahatma in Madras Presidency

Perhaps one of the things Gandhi said to them was, "If you had listened to me and treated the Panchamas like brothers, they would never have gone back on you." At any rate I heard no more about inter-caste trouble in the mills during my remaining six months in India.

I have no record of the date of the previous visit* to Madras of the Mahatma (surely no man living could more rightly be called "Great of Soul"). An open-air meeting was then arranged for him on the beach, and there for the first and last time I saw him. He was in a very poor state of health, worn out by travelling and being everywhere called upon, at all hours of the day and night, to address welcoming crowds of admirers. He sat on a chair, and gave his message, sentence by sentence, to a young man standing by him; the crowd listened in perfect quiet with close attention, but I, standing on the margin of the ring of hearers, was too far away to hear much. To-day his appearance, his frail little body destitute of physical beauty and comeliness, is familiar to the world; it was very much the same then.

From Madras he toured the lands to the south, receiving ovations everywhere, from villagers and townsfolk eager to cry in his hearing "Gandhiji-ki-jai," and among themselves busy speculating on how long a time would elapse before the "Gandhi-Raj" would be established over all India. They got little encouragement from him, according to the reports in the Madras

* It must have been in 1920 or early in 1921.

newspapers. Everywhere he sternly demanded, "Are you treating the Panchamas like brothers? How many spinning-wheels are in use here?" The answers were generally unsatisfactory, and he tried to make his hearers understand that if they wanted Swa-Raj or the Gandhi-Raj they must work for it as well as shout for it. It was, I think, not long after this tour that he declared that the only Swa Raj (own rule) that really counted was the control by each man of his own passions.

During my time of service as acting Publicity Officer I had a little encounter with Gandhi by post. In his organ *Young India*, a weekly broadsheet, he remarked in one issue that the political trouble in India resulted from the fact that Englishmen looked down upon Indians as inferiors. I wrote an unsigned letter to him saying that his statement was quite true, but that Indians, recognizing the fact, should go on to ask why it was Englishmen took up that attitude. The reason, I said, was that they were actually superior to Indians in certain respects; they were juster and more considerate as employers, more conscientious and efficient as employees, more reliable in all business relations; and as these were qualities which English people held in high esteem, it was natural that they should feel themselves superior. I did not expect any answer; but in the next issue of *Young India* Gandhi published my letter practically in full, and added his own comment. It was, "What my correspondent says is perfectly true. We must improve in these respects."

Among English writers on recent Indian political affairs it is a fashion to say that Gandhi is a great religious leader, but hopelessly incompetent as a politician. Similarly Jeanne d'Arc was considered hopelessly incompetent as a military leader by the Dauphin's generals. We might well wish that Gandhi would infect our politicians with his special brand of "incompetence."

In passing I may mention here one or two incidents which prompted me to write to Gandhi as I did. One was that my shorthand clerk in the Senate House once came to me in a passion, having been upset by a fellow Brahmin, and cried out, "My experience is, Sir, that the worst European master is better than the best Indian master." Then the point of view of a clerk in Government service was expressed to me as follows: "If you have a European superior you get up early in the morning and go to

the office and work hard all day, and go home tired out and sleep. If you have an Indian superior, you get up early in the morning and go to the office and work hard all day, and go home tired out, *and don't sleep*. You lie awake, wondering what intrigue may be on foot to turn you out of your job and put in someone else." A day or two before I wrote Mr. Gandhi, the Indian proprietor of a Madras cinema had sent messengers to me, to remind me that I was on the Board of Censors, and to tell me that I was next on the rota with a Brahmin schoolmaster, and we had to approve a new film before he could exhibit it. He begged me to be on the spot to see it shown at seven next morning; I demurred a little, but consented on being told that the schoolmaster had said it was the only time he could manage. I was at the cinema punctually. We waited half an hour for the schoolmaster, he did not appear. Then the proprietor got into his car and went to fetch him. The schoolmaster refused to come, said he would come another time. The film had to be shown twice over, at some expense and much inconvenience. The cinema proprietor boiled over with indignation. He burst out, "That is always the way. The Englishman says he will come, and he comes. The Indian says he will come, and he doesn't come."

In carrying on Gwynn's work I followed his example and imitated his methods, but with some variations. Meetings of the advisory board were held at similar intervals, I continued his series of tracts, receiving the same cordial assistance from the experts whom I asked to write them, and the number of honorary correspondents continued to grow. In a letter written on August 28th I mentioned that I was arranging for six new tracts on various diseases, one on Boy Scouts, and another on Girl Guides. I got some excellent ones on infant welfare from one of the women's hospitals my wife had visited in North India.

I made a deviation in my method of arranging for lectures and discussions. Gwynn, as I have said, went to the centre of the city, and his notices declared that all comers would be welcome, and discussion was invited. But we had on our own premises, in the old ballroom upstairs, as suitable a lecture room as could be found, except for its distance from the heart of the city, and I had not Gwynn's energy. So I arranged my meetings there, and to tempt hearers to come sent out notices, "Admission only by ticket, to

be applied for . . .," and got bigger and more influential audiences. The psychological principle discovered by Tom Sawyer in the matter of whitewashing worked in Madras just as on the banks of the Mississippi.

A more important deviation was in the matter of propaganda. The Non-Co-operation movement had reached Madras effectively, while an "Anti-Non-Co-operation" movement was growing (Indians are apt to express positive ideas by negative terms). I set to work immediately on the writing of a tract on the subject, entitled "Co-operation and Non-Co-operation," which was approved by my Board on May 12th. In this I discussed the various heads of Gandhi's advice to boycott Government schools, medical services, and law courts. On the general idea I said that non-co-operation had a double meaning. Its positive meaning was that Indians should act independently for their own good and the good of the country without waiting for Government initiative, and that was good advice; its negative meaning was that they should not avail themselves of the help which the Government gave, and that advice was bad. Indians should follow the Mahatma's advice to study the natural laws of health and abstain from the excesses that cause disease, but they should not suppose that Government dispensaries and hospitals were of no value. Let them study and think for themselves, but an English education had great value, since it gave access to the thought of all the world, in original and translated books. By all means let them shun the law-courts, and settle their disputes by friendly agreement and arbitration, the Government itself would warmly approve of that form of non-co-operation. But though the police were inefficient and corrupt, probably crime would be more prevalent than it was if India had no police force.

When I submitted the proof of this tract to the Government I was asked to delete the sentence which admitted that the police were inefficient and corrupt, and I did not object to doing so. Otherwise the tract was approved, and was extremely well received. I was asked continually for extra copies. One correspondent told me that he happened to pass the village barber's shop, and found the barber reading and expounding the vernacular version to a number of villagers.

Later on the Non-Co-operation movement took a strong hold

of the central part of the Andhra (Telugu-speaking) area which had been the chief nursery of the non-Brahmin party. The cause of this revulsion was explained to me by a friend who now (1936) is one of the representatives of the district in the Legislative Assembly, as follows: In every village the two most important people were the village *munisif*, or village headman, who was also the local petty magistrate, and was practically certain to belong to some non-Brahmin cultivating caste, and the *karnam*, or village accountant, who was equally certain to be a Brahmin. The *munisifs* in the election of the Legislative Council had organized the non-Brahmin vote, and when that party came into office and Brahmins all over the Presidency were mourning their lost supremacy, and saying "*We* are now the depressed caste," the *karnams* threw themselves into the Non-Co-operation movement, and advocated the non-payment of taxes. Finance is the Achilles heel of the Indian Government. Nobody likes paying direct taxes, and poor peasants dislike it intensely. Once a movement for holding up the land revenue took hold anywhere it would be likely to spread like wildfire all over India. Our office, on Government instructions, flooded the affected district with warnings, but what saved the situation was that when non-co-operators began to resort to violence Gandhi called the movement off.

But in the Andhra district the Brahmin malcontents had another weapon in their hands, nearly as effective. As has been stated above, the principle of making the sale of alcohol yield its maximum revenue is more completely carried out in Madras than in any other province. Every palm-tree which yields toddy is numbered, registered and taxed, and licences for the sale of toddy last for one year only and are sold annually by auction to the highest bidder. "Pussyfoot" Johnson was then touring South India and advocating Prohibition,* declaring that in America it had emptied the gaols and conferred countless other benefits. The Telugu non-co-operators took up the cry, but used another sort of argument. They incited the Panchamas, who are almost exclusively the toddy drinkers, to attend the auction of licences and intimidate would-be bidders, telling them that if no licences were issued toddy would be cheaper and more abundant. This no doubt was perfectly true, for without the help of licensed retailers the

* He arrived in Madras at the end of October 1921.

police would not be able to keep any effective check on unlicensed sales. The damage to the finances of the Madras Government was very considerable.

"Pussyfoot's" striking appearance on a Madras platform has been described above.* I was present at that public lecture which he gave in his shirt-sleeves to a large audience on a hot Sunday afternoon. In 1921 it was possible for American prohibitionists to believe in the excellence of their policy; and Johnson had no doubt that it could be enforced in India and that it should be enacted forthwith. It was easy to get plenty of support, as consumption of alcohol is almost entirely confined to Europeans and Panchamas; and Indians then, like Americans, had a pathetic faith in the virtue of passing laws against supposed moral delinquencies apart from the provision of means to enforce them effectively. Johnson was reminded that every coconut palm was a potential toddy brewery; he said that it should be easy for a Government officer to spot a man climbing up a palm a hundred feet high, ignoring the fact that the juice the climber collected might be used to make sugar instead of an intoxicant, and that by no means all coconut palms are so high. In the Madras Legislative Council almost every elected member—perhaps all without exception—was a total abstainer, but the Council could not face the financial difficulties of dispensing with the drink revenue.

Gandhi's followers were of two sorts. There were the ignorant millions who shouted for him as once the mass of pilgrims shouted "Hosanna" to the Son of David; who understood very little of his teaching, but looked upon him, despite his denials, as a Rishi endowed with superhuman power. They circulated mythical stories of his miracles, of which the most pleasing one that I came across was that when he visited Calcutta he disdained to use the Howrah bridge, and instead walked on the surface of the River Hugli, and as he walked lotus lilies sprang up round his footsteps and drifted down the river filling the city with their fragrance. When he was arrested and brought to trial for sedition, they expected him to blast his captors and the court with the magical force of his wrath, as gods wandering of old through India in the disguise of mortals had blasted those who offended them. When he submitted to the sentence and went to gaol without even

* In Chapter VII.

a verbal protest* the enthusiasm of the followers of this sort suddenly evaporated.

On the other hand there was the small but continually growing body of his real disciples. Henshaw came in one evening to our dinner-table full of an encounter with one of these. He had a hobby of buying wrecks of motor-bicycles and reconstructing others out of the sound parts. He was coming back from St. Thomas's Mount on one of these when the chain broke. He always carried a box of tools with him, and set to work to mend it. As always when there is anything to see, a little circle of Indians stood round to watch. He finished the job, looked at his hands covered with black grease, and then scanned the road to see if he could find some waste to rub it off. A young man wearing the Gandhi cap and clothed, as prescribed by Gandhi, in *khaddar*,† stepped forward, took a clean white silk handkerchief out of his pocket, and handed it to Henshaw. We all agreed that that young man was a true disciple of the Mahatma.

* On receiving his sentence of six years' imprisonment, when asked if he had anything to say, he thanked the court for the fairness and courtesy with which the trial had been conducted, and said that the judge could not, in accordance with his *official* duty, have imposed a lighter sentence.

† Hand-woven cotton cloth made of hand-spun yarn.

CHAPTER XXX

THE WORK OF THE MADRAS PUBLICITY OFFICE, 1921-1922

EARLY in August 1921 Mr. Rushbrook Williams, the Government of India publicity man, visited Madras, in the course of a tour of inspection of provincial publicity offices, bringing with him Major Crawford, and Mr. K. S. Roy of the Indian Associated Press. I had previously got the impression that he heartily disliked the whole spirit in which we in Madras did our work, and that impression was strengthened by the fact that he did not come to see me and talk about it, but instead had a long interview with Mr. Knapp, then Private Secretary to the Governor. In that interview, Knapp told me, he three times started to speak of "My publicity officers," and each time Knapp pulled him up and reminded him that publicity officers were officers of the governments of their respective provinces, and responsible to them alone. Our chairman, Rao Bahadur T. Rangachariar, invited the three visitors from Simla to a vegetarian banquet in his house, and, to my great delight, in his speech of welcome said that it was very good for them to come to Madras and learn how publicity should be carried on.

For the cordiality of the feeling towards our office of the Secretariat I was greatly indebted to the efficiency and loyalty of the staff Gwynn had recruited, in which I made no changes. One example may be cited.

On September 1, 1921, Lord Willingdon addressed the Council on the subject of the policy of the Government in relation to the Malabar rebellion and the Madras mill riots. Other business followed, and before the afternoon sitting was over, I rushed away to get to my office long enough before closing time to clear up the day's work. Immediately I got back there came a telephone message from the Secretariat that an official proclamation on the subject of the riots was in preparation, could I get it translated and distributed to the papers by noon next day? I answered that we would do our best, and asked that the copy should be sent along as soon as possible; and then explained the matter to the office. They got in touch with the translators, notified the Govern-

ment printers, and typed copies of the proclamation and sent them to be translated. Before 9.30 next morning all the vernacular papers had their copies, the press was printing the five versions (English, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Canarese) for our twenty thousand odd honorary correspondents, and arrangements had been made for immediate distribution.

It may be easily understood that since the Legislative Council meetings were held during the regular office hours of ten to five, they frequently interfered with my office work. But three circumstances mitigated this inconvenience. Gwynn had arranged that our office hours should be nine to four, instead of the usual ten to five; I had a motor-bicycle and could get quickly from Council chamber to office, and I lived opposite the office. While the Council was sitting I went to the office at eight, when the post came in, worked there till 9.30, had breakfast, and hurried to the Fort; returned in the afternoon to dictate more letters and give instructions, and went home to tea, where I was usually followed by a succession of peons bringing the typed letters to be passed and signed. No one on the staff seemed to have any objection to working overtime, no doubt because the office with its rather lofty rooms and electric fans, situated in a shady compound, was a pleasanter place to be in than their own homes. I gave all Sundays to work unless the Saturday before or the Monday after was also a Government holiday. There was always work I could do without the help of the office staff. When two holidays came together, Saturday and Sunday, or Sunday and Monday, I chose one of them only for work.

A great variety of interesting documents, letters and visitors came to me as I sat in my room. In the first place I was on the list of those to whom confidential information forwarded from Delhi or Simla to the Provincial Governors was shown. It mostly consisted of points from police reports of the rise and fall of anti-Government agitation in different areas. Next, nervous Hindus and nervous Mahomedans came and expressed their apprehensions with regard to the possible consequences of the coming of Swaraj; the Mahomedans evidently being the more apprehensive, as was natural in a province where they were in a small minority, and where the Mopla rebellion had roused deep resentment among the Hindus.

More interesting were the communications from the prac-

titioners of indigenous systems of medicine. My clerk in the Senate House had, soon after my arrival in Madras, explained to me how superior the Ayurvedic system, being founded on principles, was to Western medical science. The principles were, of course, those of mediaeval allopathy, the cure of diseases by their opposites, e.g. the cold disease of malaria should be treated by doses of the hot medicine pepper. Another informant bid me remark that in very ancient days Hindu physicians knew all about disease germs, and had given descriptions of the different sorts in documents still extant, how some had two eyes, some four and some six. One practising physician, after I took up the Publicity work, sent me copies of a number of his tracts, with the suggestion that they should be circulated in place of those written for the Publicity office by leading specialists in the Government medical services. They mostly used terms unfamiliar to me, and I understood little of their teaching, but I learnt that the four sorts of water obtained respectively from wells, ponds, tanks and rivers had different qualities, each promoting the secretion of the three humours, wind, bile and phlegm, in different proportions. I wrote appreciatively of the public spirit which induced him thus to scatter broadcast information which most *vaidyans* treasured in secret, to be handed only from father to son, and sent him back his writings as unsuitable for our use.

Still more remarkable was a letter written from some distant village by a boy just on the point of leaving school. He stated that he was by inheritance the Ayurvedic physician of the neighbourhood, but was willing to give up the practice that was waiting for him, and instead write for the Publicity Office a complete series of tracts on all diseases, their causes, prevention and cure. With his letter came one from his schoolmaster, testifying that the lad knew all these things "by inherited instinct."

Lastly, and this specially interested me, I had a visit from an intelligent young man, who told me that besides the Ayurvedic system, of which the textbooks and other literature were in Sanscrit, and the Unani modification of it under Greek influence, there existed a Tamil system which was more ancient than either. It was superior to all systems based on the theory of the four elements, earth, air, water, fire, because it recognized also the existence of a fifth element, *akasam*, more subtle than either of these. He found

it very difficult to explain what *akasam* was, since he knew of no English equivalent, and it was directly perceptible by none of the bodily senses, but I formed a vague idea, correctly or otherwise, that it was something of the nature of Bergson's *elan vital*, or the earlier conception of "life force," or spirit force. I can imagine that it might have been a help to the thinkers of India's most ancient civilization to have *akasam* to fall back upon when the phenomena under consideration could not be explained by known or imagined properties of the other four elements.

More modest were the young men who wrote to me for advice as to how they should appear when being interviewed by a possible European employer in order to impress him favourably. These I answered on the assumption that the unknown European would react much as I should myself. But my advice did not please. When I dictated to one young man the suggestion that he should shave, or be shaved, on the morning of the interview, my short-hand clerk protested. Brahmins, he said, must not shave on Tuesdays or Thursdays, nor when the moon is new, not . . . "Why not?" I asked. "Our ancestors did not." To another, who asked particularly about attire, I recommended the ordinary clothing, with care that it should be perfectly clean and neat, but that he should neither wear earrings nor paint caste marks on his forehead. My clerk passed this without comment, but I got back an answer that my advice was insulting, the earrings and caste marks were the proper means of showing respect to the person visited.

Shortly before the end of my term I got an enquiry that demanded more serious attention. The mark was then undergoing rapid depreciation abroad, but its purchasing power in Germany was not falling as fast, and at the end of 1921 and beginning of 1922 there was a great disparity between the two. Certain speculators took advantage of this to push the sale of marks among Indian students, telling them that they could, by buying marks in sufficient quantity, get two years' education in a German university for nothing, and even make money at the same time. An expenditure of so many rupees would buy so many marks, more than sufficient to pay university fees and for board and lodging for the two years; at the end of that time the mark would have recovered its pre-war rupee value, and the surplus marks still in the students' possession could be exchanged back into more

rupees than those originally invested. I received enquiries from Bombay and elsewhere as to whether this was true, and answered by a letter to the Press, giving what information I could get about the purchasing power of the mark in Germany at the time. The further tenor of my letter, so far as I remember, was that, from the information obtained, it appeared that at the moment a rupee would go something like three times as far in Germany as before the war in paying for board and lodging; but I pointed out that nobody knew how long that would last, nor whether the mark would recover its exchange value or depreciate still further. The current price represented the average estimate of what the mark was really worth in rupees, taking both possibilities into account; people who bought marks were backing their own opinions against the average estimate of the market. All that could be said was that if any Indian wanted to visit Germany the present was a special opportunity for doing so cheaply.

There were other stray pieces of information which came to my office which I considered interesting enough to put into letters home. I give here four quotations, the first of which belongs to the time of my service in the University.

Sept. 3, 1919. The official weekly gazette (*Fort St. George Gazette*) gives statements of the crop conditions and prospects of different districts. Recently the South Canara report was "Rainfall good, employment adequate, condition of standing crops good, water supply sufficient, condition of cattle good, *prospects bad*." I wrote to all the papers asking if anyone could explain how, the conditions being as stated, prospects could be bad. This brought forth a flood of letters saying it is quite true, and that the fault is in the administration. The Collector, —, has been letting the local "Konkani Brahmans," who are traders, profiteer unchecked. They bought up the whole crop at about Rs. 5 per half-bag, 84 lb., and are now retailing the same rice at Rs. 14 per bag, and have made millions in profits while the mass of the people are starving. A South Canara man, called Hamilton, has been giving me more details. He says these Brahmans have been storing the grain in temples to prevent looting. Fortunately — has been moved off, and another man named — is to go to South Canara, and if he is well coached beforehand and given the necessary powers, he will be able to search for and commandeer that stored rice. I have just been putting him in touch with R. B. Wood, who recently was appointed Director of Civil Supplies.

Undated, probably October or November 1921. I have just been

hearing about municipal affairs in Anantapur. The rule is that all these towns are to have elected Councils, and the Councils are to elect their own chairmen and govern themselves. Anantapur did the job extra well, it elected two chairmen, who are quarrelling all the time who shall sit in the chair; and meanwhile the people are quite happy because they don't pay any rates. About ten years ago Anantapur, which was a very bad town for cholera, was given a good water supply, but that costs something to maintain, and as the Council are getting in no rates it thinks the best thing will be to stop supplying water. Then the people will use the old wells and get cholera again, and then instead of worrying about pure water, they will do what they think is a much better way of dealing with cholera, sacrifice a lot of cocks and buffaloes to the cholera goddess.

Sept. 9, 1921. The other day a holy man came to see me. Most holy men are unspeakably dirty. But this holy man was quite clean. He told me that he lived in Kashmir, but once a year he walked to Rameswaram, just opposite Ceylon, and that he told people the past, present and future from their hands. I did not give him my hand to read, but he told me that I had three marks on my forehead by which he knew that I cared nothing for money, but only for higher things. He gave me a lucky bead, which will give me long life and prosperity. I gave him a rupee—so we both made a good bargain.

Feb. 23, 1922. Got an interesting letter from the only native of the Laccadive Islands who understands English, forwarding a loyal address to the Prince and a statement of all the economic ills the islanders suffer from.

This last quotation is from a letter written at the time of the visit of the Prince of Wales. Lady Pentland's *Memoir of Lord Pentland* gives an account of their visit to the Laccadive Islands early in his administration, and of the economic difficulties under which these remote islands suffered. They were for administrative purposes a part of the District of Malabar, and are described in Logan's well-known District Manual. The most curious fact that he records is that Minicoy, the biggest of the islands, has a duodecimal notation, with distinct words for numbers up to twelve, after which they go twelve-one, twelve-two . . . two-twelves-one and so on up to eight-twelves-three for ninety-nine, eight-twelves-four for a hundred, for which number another word also was used, so that 144 was not twelve twelves but hundred-3 twelves-eight. How and whence did this duodecimal count get to Minicoy?

The Visit to Madras of King Edward VIII as Prince of Wales

In the beginning of 1922 the forthcoming visit of the Prince of Wales gave the Publicity Office a special task which took up much of its time. It was heralded by the coming of a great flood of literature from Delhi dealing with the Prince's life history up to date. It declared that his coming was prompted by his overpowering desire to make the acquaintance of his future subjects, and described his personality generally, and especially his power of fascinating everybody with whom he came into even the slightest contact by his unique charm, with so much enthusiasm that I feared the laudation was overdone. All that was said might be perfectly true, but since only an infinitesimal percentage of the three hundred and fifty millions of those future subjects could, in the time available, be allowed the opportunity of experiencing personally the Prince's fascination, I feared that hopes were being created in many loyal breasts which could only be disappointed. I wished that the Prince himself had been able to see the Government of India's Publicity Office's output in proof, in which case, I thought, he would have blue pencilled it liberally. On this occasion however my opinions did not count. We dutifully relayed the pronouncements transmitted from Delhi as they came to us.

The Prince landed in Bombay in November 1921. It had originally been intended that his visit should take place the previous January, and that he should inaugurate the meetings of the new Legislative Councils. This had been done so well and successfully by the Duke of Connaught that the rank and file of the Government services were taken by surprise at learning that another royal visit was to take place so soon; and in Madras, at least, the general feeling was that the time was ill-chosen. Mrs. Brown may feel highly honoured at getting a letter from her noble friend, Lady Vere de Vere, saying that she is coming for a week's visit, but if Mrs. Brown happens to be specially hard up, daily expecting the tradesmen to stop supplies, and the cook-general has given notice in a tantrum, she will wish that her esteemed visitor had chosen some other time. That was much the situation of the Indian administration in 1921. The trade boom had passed even at the time of the Duke of Connaught's visit, but then well-to-do loyal people had made great efforts to contribute liberally to

the expense of giving him a fitting welcome. Since then the trade depression had deepened month by month; many merchants had been driven to choose between bankruptcy and refusal to pay for imported goods. When the donors had already given to the best of their ability they could not respond very gladly to a summons to give still more abundantly out of their diminishing resources. Moreover Civil Servants, and still more the police, with nerves already on edge with the strain of the contest with the non-co-operation and Khilafat agitations, dreaded the extra responsibility about to be imposed on them.

The Prince's landing in Bombay was met by the local non-co-operators by the proclamation of a *hartal*—a universal cessation of business in token of mourning, which had its natural consequence of riots and bloodshed. We heard that if the Prince had been allowed then to act according to his own judgment he would have re-embarked straightway and returned home. If so, the result would pretty certainly have proved that his judgment was sound. Indians feel very acutely any reflection on their good manners and hospitality; and the refusal of the Prince to make his intended visit when he found he was so badly received would have been taken by the whole nation as a just and dignified rebuke for unmannerly conduct. The Non-Co-operation movement would have "lost face," and would, for a time at least, have ceased to be formidable. But he was too thickly surrounded by men who might have been regarded as having failed in their duty if the official programme had not been carried through, and was over-persuaded into proceeding in accordance with it.

As it was, the effect of the *hartal* was to increase the already excessive apprehensions of the police, and to make them more determined than ever to keep the Prince under their eye and effectively protected; thereby greatly increasing the difficulty of his achieving the results so confidently predicted.

From Bombay the Prince went north and traversed the northern provinces, meeting with varying receptions, then sailed from Calcutta to Burma, and arrived in Madras on his return journey in February. I was called upon to make the necessary arrangements for the reception as guests of the Madras Government of the small but distinguished group of special correspondents of the London Press who accompanied him; Rushbrook Williams, who

also came, having been appointed the official historian of the tour, made his own arrangements. I was allowed an ample sum of money for the purpose, and owing to the ready co-operation of all whose help was required, none of whom attempted to profiteer, I was able to return to the Treasury more than half of the amount allotted. I had a preliminary interview with the Chief of the Police, who seemed to be racked by anxiety to get the visit safely over and his too-precious royal charge handed over to other guardianship.

There was, of course, a great gathering of the élite of Madras, a pretty comprehensive body, in Government House, to meet the Prince, and he gallantly endured the ordeal of personally shaking hands with everyone present, a form of exercise which, continued as in this case for several hours without intermission, becomes more and more painfully fatiguing. When an old lady approached the dais in her turn, he recognized her lack of strength immediately, and sprang forward to meet her and save her the effort to mount the steps, a kindly act which the whole company noted with appreciation. One of the special correspondents told me that on board ship he had practised special exercises in order to be able to complete such handshakings without flinching.

There was some of the disappointment which I feared. I got a visit from a veteran soldier who had been misled into thinking that he would get the opportunity of a chat, and of telling the Prince something of all the campaigns in which he had fought. He vented his bitter disappointment in my ears. I tried to soothe him and explain that if there had been a possibility of such a chat, I was sure the Prince would have been delighted to hear his tale. More reasonably there was disappointment among the University students. A visit to the Presidency College had been arranged, and the undergraduates looked forward to it eagerly, expecting to be able to get a free talk with the Prince, still a young man like themselves, and to exchange ideas with him. If this had been permitted, there is no doubt that they would have met him with perfect friendliness and courtesy; but actually the proceedings were brief, stiff and formal.

If only the Prince's visit had been postponed for two or three years, and planned with understanding, it would undoubtedly have had an immense effect. Indians cherish the highest respect for

royalty, and the title "King-Emperor" carries with it associations of peace and prosperity, rooted in traditions of the "golden age" of the strong and just rule of the Emperor Akbar.

The Anti-Hookworm Campaign

I gave up my office and left Madras at the end of March 1922. The last month or two saw a new publicity campaign, on Lord Willingdon's initiative; this time directed against hookworm disease, which in England is known as miners' ankylostomiasis, as it is seldom known with us except in coal mines. It is caused by an intestinal parasite armed with hooks, which attaches itself to the walls of the alimentary canal, and sucks its nutriment from them, causing general debility and wounds which increase the liability to any sort of disease. Power to tolerate these parasites varies greatly from one individual to another, and only a minority of the Indian people who harbour them are so much affected as to be considered to be suffering from hookworm disease, but all are more or less prejudicially affected.

The hookworms produce eggs abundantly, which are passed out of the body with the motions. If, as is frequent in India, the carrier relieves himself on the high-road, the eggs fasten on to the next barefooted passer-by who treads on them, hatch, penetrate the skin, get into the blood channel and so into the lungs, get coughed up into the mouth, are swallowed and so reach their destined habitat. Medical inquiries into sample areas indicated that 90 per cent or more of the people who habitually went barefoot (the great majority) in Madras and Bengal were affected. One of the Rockefeller institutions for medical work made a special study of the subject, as the disease was very prevalent among the "poor whites" in the old slave states, and regarded as largely responsible for their poor physique.

Lord Willingdon secured the assistance of the Rockefeller Trust, and one of its experts was sent to Madras. Our bungalow was used as a sort of annexe to the Secretariate, to provide office room in temporary emergencies, and so the young American who came was given office space on our first floor, and I heard something about the work in South America as well as in the United States of America. The results, he told me, were splendid, not so much because hookworm was itself so deadly, as because the precautions

against it were equally effective against other diseases due to uncleanly habits. It was, he said, a very easy thing to cure the disease, as a drug was available which expelled the parasite, but to cure it was futile if the patient straightway got re-infected. But when patients experienced the increase of vigour and enjoyment of life always felt when free from the worms, it was much easier to get an improvement in the customary methods of dealing with excrement.

The work of applying this knowledge was started by approaching planters, and inducing them to arrange for a medical examination of their resident coolies, a great majority of whom were always found to be infected. These were cured, and instruction given on avoidance of re-infection. Then our office circulated the information supplied, and Lord Willingdon borrowed the biggest cinema hall in the city for lectures illustrated by films showing microscopically the life history of the parasite, the manner of infection, and the appearance of patients before and after medical treatment.

We had a second cinema show arranged by Lord Willingdon, giving an illustrative lecture by an American expert on conservative forest exploitation, and the use of petrol engines for felling trees by uprooting them, transporting them and sawing them into logs, the same engine, a tractor equipped with suitable attachments, serving all purposes. This film was brought to Madras, I believe, for the particular instruction of the Legislative Council.

Of both these efforts I only saw the beginning, and have not been able to follow the further developments since I left India.

The Indian Fiscal Commission

The Indian Fiscal Commission also had its sittings on our upstairs floor during its stay in Madras. During the war the established Indian policy of *laissez faire* was submitted for re-examination by the Indian Industrial Commission, which published its report, full of valuable suggestions, in 1918. But the one proposal which, because it involved political issues, interested the Indian public, was the fostering of manufacturing industries by means of protective duties on imports, and the consideration of this question was excluded from its reference. Consequently

the Industrial Commission's report excited no interest, and nothing practical could be done until a decision could be come to on the issue of Protection versus Free Trade.

Questionnaires were sent out rather widely, and I sent in a reply to the effect that no benefit could be expected from protective duties comparable with what could be obtained by further development of the education and health services and improvement of roads; but that, as Indian opinion was dead-set on protection, the only practical line of economic advance was to let them have their way in that, in the hope that afterwards they would give consideration to the measures which would really be effectual.*

When I was called upon to give verbal evidence, the Chairman seemed annoyed at not being able to classify me as a Free Trader or Protectionist, evidently expecting an ex-professor of Economics to be a dogmatic advocate of one or the other, and he pressed me to give a straight answer, as to whether I thought that from the purely economic point of view—which presumably meant from the point of view of attaining maximum output of saleable goods—Protection or Free Trade were the better policy. What could I say? The consequences of making the change from the latter to the former would obviously be so complex that it was impossible to forecast its net effect. All I could say—I forget whether I did say it then—was that Protection was a much more reasonable policy for India, a debtor country with vast undeveloped resources, and as yet a predominantly peasant population, than in Great Britain where the conditions were just the opposite. I could see that the Commissioners considered me a very unsatisfactory witness.

But worse was to come. I was asked whether I thought special consideration should be given to the protection of firms which provided the material for war. I said, "Certainly not. Either there is not going to be another war, in which case such consideration is unnecessary; or there is going to be another war, in which case it will be of such a nature that the rational course for Governments will be to provide lethal chambers to enable people to die painlessly." The Commissioners looked at one another in

* Since writing the above I have come across a cutting from *The Times* of March 4, 1922, giving a summary of my written evidence. See note at the end of this chapter.

silence, and asked me no more questions. What was the good of questioning one so destitute of common sense?

When, after I had left India, the report was issued, it was seen that the majority pronounced for the rapid development of Indian industries by means of discriminating protection, the discrimination being determined by special Tariff Boards for each industry that applied for protection, the members of which should be paid the salaries of High Court Judges to keep them above the temptation of being bribed. The adoption of this report was carried by the Chairman's casting vote; the defeated section wanted no discrimination, but immediate all-round protection.

The Government accepted the majority report with the proviso that the adoption of its proposals must be conditional on their not upsetting the finances of the State. This was necessary, as the Commission had failed to consider the cost of its proposals, and if they had been adopted *in toto* the revenue would have been hit very badly.

Some Economic Enquiries

Before leaving this subject I have to record some items of economic research carried on during my publicity year which link on with my work in the University.

The Rev. D. G. M. Leith, a Wesleyan missionary, whose life was most unfortunately cut short by a bathing accident soon after my departure from India, had founded the Triplicane Brotherhood, which met in the Kellett Institute in the main street of the township of Triplicane, now near the centre of the city of Madras. Mr. Lokanathan was one of his most valued recruits, and they formed a little committee to calculate, on Seebohm Rowntree's lines, the minimum cost of maintaining a "normal" family in a state of working efficiency. As our normal family we took a man, wife and *two* dependent children, instead of three; since the usual interval between births in India is longer than with us, the infantile mortality very high, and the age at which children begin to earn very low.* By the help of a number of volunteer inves-

* The interval between births was given to me as two and a half years in working-class families, and a good deal longer in the middle classes. In the former class the prolonged suckling which usually postpones a second birth was generally ended sooner by the mother having to go out to work.

tigators the necessary cost of the physical minimum of food, clothing, shelter, light and fuel in the city of Madras was worked out and estimated at Rs.17 per month (25s. 6d. at present rate of exchange).

We published this result in the Madras papers, inviting comments. In those that we received the objections that our estimate was too low were so closely balanced by those that said it was too high as to make us conclude that it was very near the truth. The *Madras Mail* published a leader on the subject, saying that it was absurd to allege that the necessary cost of living was as much as Rs.17 per family, when it was a notorious fact that a great many families lived on much less. The retort was obvious—it was also a notorious fact that a great many families in the city failed through poverty to maintain a decent standard of physical efficiency. But I felt that this answer was insufficient. Rs.17 per month for four persons is Rs.51 per annum per head, and it was improbable that the *average* income in Madras Presidency of families dependent on their labour for a living was appreciably higher. How about those Madras workers whose income fell below the Presidency average, of whom there must have been a great number? Their physical condition was undoubtedly poor, but by all appearance not so deplorable as our calculations would indicate. There must be some mitigating circumstances. What were they?

Two suggested themselves to my mind. One, the obligation to give alms when asked, recognized by all Indians. When, as related above, the question of the minimum wage for Government clerks was under consideration I was struck by the fact that my colleagues on the Committee to which the question was referred were unanimous in urging that something must be allowed for almsgiving in the monthly budget, some small change must be kept handy for the purpose, and if it were beyond a man's means to give even the smallest coin, he must at least give some grains of paddy.

Further, I thought that allowance must be made for the sharp eyes of hungry women and children. No poor woman passes a dab of cow dung on the high-road without covering it with dust, rolling it into a ball and carrying it home to dry and make into fuel. The cow-dung cakes (*varatties*) so made are always saleable. Then one bit of personal experience struck me as enlightening.

With a little family party I picnicked one afternoon in the casuarina wood of the Theosophical settlement by the mouth of the Adyar, and roamed the wood for fallen branches to make the fire and boil the water for tea. Not a single twig could I find. Do casuarina trees never let any dead wood fall? It seemed hardly credible. Or did the young children from the neighbouring parcheries and fishing villages regularly search the woods so thoroughly as to let nothing escape them? If so, they would not overlook anything else which they thought could be turned to use.

The Triplicane Brotherhood and the tiny staff of the Economics department of the University followed up this preliminary enquiry by collecting family budgets in Triplicane and elsewhere in order to get some light on the question of "primary poverty." I particularly asked that one parchery should be selected as a sample and studied as thoroughly as possible. This task proved even more difficult than we had anticipated. It was to be expected that the untouchable Parayans would be very little disposed to disclose information about their private affairs to our young Brahmin investigators, and so the parchery selected was one very much under Roman Catholic influence, and it was hoped that the priests would give some useful help. But Mr. Ramakrishnan, one of the University Readers in Economics, who took charge of the investigation, reported that the priests were entirely indifferent to the economic welfare of their converts; their one concern was to get them baptized, and their souls saved—after that the shorter the time they lived the fewer would be the sins they would have to wipe out in purgatory. Happiest were the innocent babes who died immediately after baptism!

Meanwhile, as Publicity Officer, I felt called upon to attempt an estimate of the average income per head in the Presidency. There were two much quoted official estimates for all India. The first was made after the great famine of the seventies. It was based on estimates of the average acreage under the principal crops, the average out-turn per acre and the average wholesale prices of those crops. Then a very rough guess was made at the pecuniary value of other crops raised, and 50 per cent added for the value of the goods and services provided by all non-agricultural industries and workers. The sum thus calculated was Rs.20 per head per annum.

The next estimate was made at the end of the nineteenth century after another great famine. It was purposely made by the same method, as the main purpose was to discover if there had been in the twenty years' interval any improvement or retrogression in the economic condition of the country. The figure so reached was then Rs.30 per head per annum. Lord Curzon a year or two later drew particular attention to this fact, as indicating that the poverty of India, though still very intense, had been abated during those twenty years of British rule. It was a fair contention, since there was little change in the purchasing power of the rupee during the interval.

But in 1920, two more decades having elapsed, that second estimate, which was being used for controversial purposes, had become entirely obsolete. From 1900 onwards there had been a rapid increase in rupee prices, affecting specially the main products of Indian soil and labour, and this had acted as a great stimulus to production and industrial development. The total quantity of produce per head had undoubtedly increased greatly, and that increase when stated in rupees was still further exaggerated. There was also the fact that an estimate for all India would not necessarily be equally good for Madras.

In forming my estimate, the only practicable course was to follow broadly the same method as that previously adopted; i.e. not to enquire into total incomes of income-tax payers, professional men, wage-earners and so on, which is the method followed for England and Wales; but to enquire into the total contribution to the annual dividend of different productive industries, beginning with the all-important one of agriculture. The change needed was to broaden the basis of observed fact.

For this purpose I applied to the Agricultural Department for:

- (1) The acreage under each crop in the Presidency in the year 1919-20—the last year for which statistics were available.
- (2) The average estimated out-turn by weight and measure per acre for the decade up to 1919-20. This was chosen as probably more reliable than that for the actual year, since estimates for particular years are calculated from those for average years, and not *vice versa*.
- (3) The actual wholesale prices in 1919-20 of those crops.

All these figures were supplied me. A number of questions were put for my decision; for example:

Q. Should cattle dung be included? A. Only that portion which is made into varatties, and either sold in the towns or used in the villages. Dung used as manure had its value embodied in the crops for which it is used; to include it would be to count it twice over.

Q. How about straw, and fodder crops? A. For the same reason count only what is sold to towns or used as human food. Fodder eaten by the peasants' working cattle or cows is part of the cost of production and has its value embodied in that of the crops raised or milk obtained.

Q. How about young cattle? A. Reckon only those sold to non-agricultural purchasers. As a matter of fact, owing to lack of statistical information, all straw, dung and live cattle were left out of account.

Deductions had of course to be made for (1) the quantities of grain, etc., used as seed, and (2) the loss by wastage, e.g. grain deteriorating through bad storage, the spoil taken by rats and ants, etc. I was subsequently criticized, and I think fairly, for not making sufficient allowance on this head.

On the other hand the estimate of the output of milk supplied by the department—only 5 per cent of the cows in the Presidency supplying any milk at any time for human consumption, and those only to the extent of a ha'porth a day—imagine a hundred cows supplying only 2½d. worth of milk per day!—seemed to me too low to be credible, although I accepted it; and I found all my students of opinion that in their own villages it was much greater. I also left one big item out of account—the *commercial* value of the annual output of toddy. If I had included it, there would have been a general protest that the *real* value of toddy was a minus quantity.

In this way I worked out my estimate of the total contribution of agriculture to the total income. This was of course very different from the total income of the agricultural population, as it included what was taken from them by rents paid to parasitic land-holders, zemindars and others, by taxes and by interest to usurers. It was what they won from the soil, not what they could keep for themselves and use to supply their own needs.

Next came the question of how the contribution of the non-

agricultural workers and industries to the total Presidency income should be estimated. It was impossible to make any detailed enquiry into this question in the time available, and any direct approach to it could only have led to very unsatisfactory results. The old estimate that it amounted to 50 per cent of the agricultural income seemed too rough a guess, and the assumptions on which it was based had not been stated. In making my estimate I started with the fact that the numbers of workers engaged in agriculture were to all others in the proportion of five to two. Which class could be considered more productive? Obviously workers engaged in organized large-scale industry, e.g. those in the cotton-mills, were many times as productive of commercial values as poor peasants and agricultural coolies, but they were a small minority; how about the great mass of village artisans and petty traders? To these I thought it probable that the old theory of the French Physiocrats of the eighteenth century could be applied pretty safely—that a worker of these classes "*ne gagne que sa vie*," and only he who worked on the land produced for himself or others a "*produit net*." Taking the two classes together I thought it could be assumed with reasonable probability that the respective total contributions of agricultural and non-agricultural industries (including wholesale and retail trade) were approximately in the same proportion as the numbers engaged. I therefore added 40 per cent only to the estimated money value of agricultural output to get the grand total.

The average income per head for 1919-20 thus estimated came to a little over Rs.100 per annum. I believed this was an under rather than an over estimate, but that the error was less than 5 per cent. It must be noticed that this was the average for all incomes derived from the productions of the Presidency, from the biggest to the smallest. The equations—Average all-round income per head = twice the average proletariat income per head, and average proletariat income per head = minimum cost in the City of maintaining physical efficiency, seemed reasonable in the circumstances.

It should be added however that the agricultural income of the year 1919-20 was not maintained in the years that followed, since in that year there was the phenomenon of exceptionally high prices combined with good harvests. The harvests of 1920-21,

as stated above, were bad, and when a series of good years followed, prices fell. But had there been sufficient interest in the subject, the estimate we made in 1921 could easily have been revised and corrected in subsequent years.

By the conditions of my appointment I was entitled to four weeks' leave in the year. As I had not taken a day's leave up to March, I applied then for permission to take it all at the end of my year of service. Rather to my surprise the Secretariate demurred, but, being perhaps exceptionally human, when I pleaded that if my request were granted I should just be able to get home in time for my silver wedding, it gave the required permission on condition that I found an approved deputy to fill my place for the last month. I found him in one of the Brahmin members of the Publicity Board.

I had a farewell chat with him on general topics before leaving. We got on to fundamental theological doctrines. He told me that the one dogma with regard to which he felt certain was that of reincarnation. He felt that it must be true, it was necessary to make belief in an ordered universe and divine justice possible. I could not deny that as a philosophic way of "justifying the ways of God to man" it was more satisfactory than either the Protestant doctrine of Heaven and Hell, or the Roman Catholic doctrine of Heaven, Hell and Purgatory. The assurance with which he spoke enabled me better to understand Gandhi. The story—true or false—later came to me that when an unnamed Englishman remonstrated with him on the ground that his anti-Government agitation would probably bring disaster on the Indian people, he answered calmly, "The worst that could happen to us would be that we should all die." If so, the addition, "and be reincarnated in due time in happier conditions. Let us only keep our souls unsullied by hate and malice and all will be well with us," is implied.

We next turned to fundamental Indian politics. I asked him, "Is there anything that the British Government can do that would make the Indian people content under it?" He said, "Nothing except the abolition of Indian poverty." I said, "Is that possible with so dense a population and so high a birth-rate?" He admitted that it was not.

The necessary inference was obvious. We left it unuttered.

**NOTE — Evidence submitted to the Fiscal Commission ("The Times,"
March 4, 1922)**

Dr Gilbert Slater does not consider that a simple policy of either unadulterated free trade or out-and-out protection is possible for India. Complete free trade is ruled out for the simple reason that the general sentiment of all the Indian opinion that counts is strongly protectionist, and India to-day controls its own fiscal policy. On the other hand, owing to a combination of financial and political considerations, India requires a large and increasing revenue from Customs. So Dr Slater comes to the conclusion that India must have a tariff mainly for revenue, but modified by a protectionist flavour.

The questionnaire includes an enquiry "When a duty is imposed on an article imported from abroad, do you approve in theory or in practice of imposing an excise duty on the same article manufactured in India?" Dr Slater expressed approval in theory. As a matter of practice, he said, such an excise duty was obviously desirable in the case of tobacco, it was already levied to a certain extent in respect of alcohol and salt. Yet Indian objections to its application to textile, iron and steel, and similar industries would be overpowering. He thought it possible, however, that the excise duty on mill-woven cloth* might be allowed to remain for revenue purposes, and as some protection to the hand loom weaver.

Asked whether he looked forward to India becoming in time independent of other countries in regard to all her requirements of manufactured goods, Dr Slater said that it was clear that India could easily expand its production in many directions, including cotton goods of medium counts. He thought the climate would never permit effective competition with Lancashire in the finest cotton goods, but the increased area under Punjab-American and Cambodha would make a great extension of cotton manufactures of counts between 30's and 60's practicable. It would apparently be a long time before India could excel in the manufacture of goods requiring exceptional accuracy and care on the part of the workmen. The Madras Government had taken practical measures to encourage cottage cotton industries. Dr Slater spoke favourably of an industry which is still pretty vigorous in Southern India. He said that in towns like Kumbakonam, Madura, Conjeeveram, etc., there was a skilled weaving industry, producing relatively expensive goods specially appealing to local taste, and still prosperous. This industry demanded encouragement by continual improvement of method.

* It was 3½ per cent *ad valorem*, the duty on imported cotton cloth being 11 per cent. Hence the Indian mills had a 7½ per cent protection against British and Japanese, and the Indian hand loom weaver a 3½ per cent protection against Indian mills. I considered this reasonable.

and apparatus, and fostering of co-operation. There was next a manufacture of cheap, coarse cloth, which tended to be gradually superseded by the improvement of communications and the competition of machine-made cloth, but which persisted obstinately in remote districts. Closely associated with this was the question of hand-spinning and hand-loom weaving as a leisure time occupation in districts specially liable to famine, which was capable of being organized as a defence against famine.

Dr. Slater told the Commission that he feels it is premature to raise the question of Imperial Preference before India decides whether or not its policy shall be protectionist. He recalls the undoubted fact that when Joseph Chamberlain raised this issue in England nearly twenty years ago it appeared to Indians that a fresh scheme was on foot for subordinating Indian commercial and manufacturing interests to those of the United Kingdom. Assuming that India definitely embarks upon a protectionist policy it appears to him that common sense and common decency would require that as long as India relies upon the British Navy for protection by sea, India must regard it as an obvious duty to keep in view, in its fiscal policy, the aim of assisting the maritime trade of the Empire upon which that Navy must depend.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, 1921-1922

SOME account has already been given of the start of the Madras Legislative Council under the Reformed constitution of 1919. My work in connection with it gradually increased during the year of my membership, February 1921 to March 1922 inclusive. The proceedings were always interesting, and on the whole I found them very encouraging for the future of the Presidency.

From this point of view the debate on missionary schools referred to above* was specially noteworthy. During the election campaign *New India* urged with much emphasis a proposal that a Conscience Clause on the lines of that in the English Education Act of 1870 should be imposed on all schools maintained by religious bodies which received Government grants. Rather early in the session the Brahmin opposition tabled a motion to this effect. The Government arranged that the Rev. E. M. Macphail, Principal of the Madras Christian College, a nominated member, should be invited to speak in opposition, but that no other European should speak, and that all Europeans without exception should be asked to refrain from voting.

Macphail's reply to the speeches of the mover and seconder of the motion was that subscribers in Great Britain and America were chiefly interested in the schools because they knew that all children regularly attended the Bible lessons given daily. If that ceased to be the rule subscriptions would certainly fall off, and then the Societies would be obliged to do without one or the other of the two financial resources on which they relied, voluntary subscriptions and Government grants, and probably a number of schools would have to be closed.

In the subsequent debate some non-Brahmin speakers denounced the motion, somewhat unfairly, I thought, as a Brahmin intrigue to check the progress in education of the other castes. Others, and I rather fancy a Mahomedan also, declared that they felt that all school education of young children should be on a religious basis, and they were very glad that such instruction was

* Page 156.

given. In the result the motion was defeated by a two to one majority.

I witnessed only one intervention by Lord Willingdon in the debates. It was that mentioned above as occurring on September 1st. My report home, written the same day in the Chamber, reads:

Lord Willingdon spoke very clearly and quietly; gave a summary of the Malabar rising, spoke very well about Government commiseration for sufferers, viz. (1) Government servants, (2) law-abiding private persons, and (3) the Moplas, ignorant men deluded by an unscrupulous agitation. He next spoke about the Perambore riots,* and said that the Government was determined to use all its power, civil and military, to maintain order. There was non-Brahmin applause. But S. Srinivasa Aiyangar, who is now, with M. Ramachandra Rao away, the leader of the Opposition, gave notice of a motion for adjournment to discuss the Perambore riots. It is significant that there is no motion for the discussion of Malabar. I think there is a general feeling that India must choose between a hearty support of Government in repressive measures and gradually increasing chaos leading to general civil war between Hinduism and Mahomedanism. The motion for adjournment was disallowed—a significant step.

We have by a small majority reduced the time limit for speeches from fifteen to ten minutes.

(Written later the same day):

I may perhaps conclude the history this contains by saying that one Thanikachalam Chetti† organized a protest against the disallowance of the Perambore debate during the tiffin interval. It took the form of refusing to return to the Council. I suppose between twenty and thirty members took part. (They had a little meeting of their own in the refreshment room which supplied Indian meals.)

The debate on the Mill strike did not take place till October. I mentioned it in a letter home dated the 12th, which noted that both our Adi-Dravida speakers took part and did well. One of these was a Mr. Raju, a lecturer on the staff of the Christian College, the other, I think, a fisherman, as black as the darkest negro. Both were nominated members, as no member of an untouchable caste had any chance of election. The latter member

* I.e. the cotton-mills riots, Perambore is the quarter of Madras City in which the mills are situated.

† A non-Brahmin member.

spoke with great rapidity in Tamil, amid frequent cheers and laughter. It was the only time I heard a speech in the Chamber in any Indian vernacular. I spoke, and much to the same effect as to the trade union representatives before the strike began, and appealed to them to be prepared to compromise.

Small committees, usually of five members, were appointed for the preliminary discussion of Government proposals for legislation. I had a place on one or two of these.

One dealt with the problem of Parcheries. These Parayan settlements were scattered in various places within the city boundaries, in some cases quite near the centre, on land in private ownership, which the owners had permitted to be so used in return for the payment of a small ground rent. In most cases these plots of land had been so used for long but unknown periods of time, but the landowners at least held that the occupants, who had built or inherited the huts, and were living in them and keeping them in repair, had no legal security of tenure, and that they could lawfully be evicted at any moment unless the ground rent already paid covered the time of eviction. Land was rapidly becoming more valuable, and particularly sites for motor garages were in request, so that the homes of many of these poor people were in danger. The same prospect hung over other workers' settlements. For example there was a settlement I knew in a grove of coconut-palms and other trees, shady, cool and pleasant, of Oddars,* a

* *The Oddars, or Woddars.* These workers went to their work in little family groups, man and wife working together, and taking their children with them. The wife would carry a younger child at the hip, with its legs round her waist, and its back supported by an arm, leaving the other hand free. The man would carry an older child on his shoulders, while those still older would trot along by the side, the boys stark naked, except possibly for a bangle or anklet, and the little girls only wearing in addition a sort of little shield of silver suspended in front by a string round the waist. The men did the digging of the trenches, the women received the earth in baskets, and deposited it in its temporary place, while the children played about quietly without wandering away. When they returned home the women set to work to cook and prepare the family meal, while the men went to the nearest licensed shop for their evening toddy. They could not afford to drink much, which perhaps was all to the good, as Madras toddy is about twice as alcoholic as good English ale. On return they seemed to be only pleasantly exhilarated. The huts seemed very dark inside, but when the eye had adjusted itself to the change from the brilliant sunshine outside, they seemed to get sufficient light. They consisted—at least those I entered—of but

Telugu caste of earth-workers, who, I presume, were in a similar legal position with regard to their homes.

The measure which was referred to us was for the purpose of giving Adi Dravidas in parcheries security of tenure as long as they paid the agreed ground rent. In the Bill as submitted to us for report it was provided that all disputes should be settled by a court of summary jurisdiction. The Brahmin lawyers on the committee, lawyer-like, wanted to add a clause giving either party the right of appeal to a higher court. I strongly objected. Such a clause, I held, would be inflicting injustice under pretence of making the justice more perfect; it would in effect take away with one hand what was purported to be given with the other. One thing that I thought I had learnt in my travels in the villages was that right of appeal was a curse to the poor litigant. In the end the proposal was defeated, and the Committee recommended the Bill as it had been drafted.

In a letter dated September 1st I wrote:

I had to attend a meeting yesterday of the Board of Health, to discuss a plan for creating, as an experiment, District Boards of Health in six of the Madras Districts. A District is something like a big county, average population about 2,000,000. Each District has a District Board and is divided into about ten Taluks, each of which has a Taluk Board. The proposal is that the District Board of Health shall consist of the presidents of all these, and its business shall be to co-ordinate the Taluk Boards, which are sanitary authorities. The presidency maintains eight cholera parties, ready to go wherever cholera breaks out. It is thought that five will now suffice, and that the other three can be split into halves, and their personnel put at the service of the six District Boards of Health. One scheme that it is thought may spring from this is the registering of *dais* (indigenous midwives), and the gradual levelling up of their education and training.

Framing the Budget

After the Christmas interval the most important Council business for me was the detailed consideration of the budget as one one room each, built on the bare ground, and containing only the barest minimum of household utensils. The physique and general health and cheerfulness of the people seemed good. Mr. Madeley, the Borough Engineer, told me that an Oddar pair—man and wife—did, in a day about two-thirds as much work as an English navvy. Needless to say they received much less pay.

member of a Finance Committee of five. Three of the other members of the Committee were picked out from the majority of the Council as abler and more influential than the average, in the hope that they would be prepared to advocate in the Council the proposals that they had approved in committee, and relieve the Government Front Bench of some of the burden of the task of getting the budget through. The committee had as Chairman Sir Charles Todhunter, the Finance Member of the Governor's Council.

On the whole we got on fairly well. We had the heads of departments before us, and cross-examined them to make them justify the demands on the Treasury they put forward. In one case, I remember, the victim of our inquisitiveness failed, in our opinion, to show that a proposal for reorganization of a division of his department which he had made on the plea that it would lead to greater economy and efficiency, would not have had the opposite results. On some points I did not agree with my colleagues. I thought they were too stingy in their grants for medical services, and too lavish towards the Department of Industry. Their readiness to grant the Minister who had charge of that department all that he asked for did not seem to me to be well calculated to promote its efficiency. I proposed that the department should be allowed a fixed annual grant, and in addition all the profits it made out of the enterprises it established and put on a paying basis. This, I thought, would encourage the staff to push on with energy and caution; whereas if it were allowed to dip its hand into the public pocket without any effective check beyond the supervision of the Minister, it would, I feared, become both slack and extravagant. Naturally the Minister had too much confidence in his own merits to agree, and his word was law with my non-Brahmin colleagues. There were party interests behind.

Todhunter's chief concern was, naturally, with the balancing of the budget, no easy matter with the great slump of trade and the effectiveness of the "Temperance" campaign in the Telugu districts. He was also disappointed, when the budget came before the full Council, with the amount of help he got from the three non-Brahmin committee-men. They were decidedly dumb dogs then.

A Proposed Medical Register

I had two proposals of my own to press on the Council, which I believed would be of great benefit to the Presidency if adopted, but which were not likely to occur to any other Councillor. The first was a motion for the voluntary registration of practitioners of indigenous systems of medicine. In no respect, I thought, was the poverty of the people more distressing than in the matter of efficient and sufficient medical advice and aid. There was no possibility for generations to come for the number of doctors trained on European lines ever to increase sufficiently to supply what was needed; for any immediate amelioration we had to look for an improvement in the general standard of knowledge and skill of native practitioners, of whom the numbers were very great, and in whom the masses of the people put their trust.

I therefore proposed that Madras should imitate the plan of reform for Great Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century, as follows (I quote the items from memory):

(1) All physicians of the indigenous schools in practice should be invited to register.

(2) Those who did register should be invited to elect from their own number a General Medical Council.

(3) This General Medical Council should receive sufficient financial assistance to enable it to establish schools of instruction, publish textbooks, conduct examinations and confer degrees.

(4) It should then be authorized to prescribe the conditions under which new applicants should be admitted to registration.

(5) Registered practitioners should be entitled to affix a title (similar to our L.R.C.P.) to their names, which should be barred to others.

I did not propose that, at first at any rate, registration should confer any additional privileges; and, particularly, I did not consider that it was advisable that this General Medical Council should have the power to strike practitioners off the Register without allowing them the right of appeal to some outside authority.

The effect of my plan, as I calculated, would be that the indigenous systems would be dragged into the open. When their doctrines were embodied in easily accessible textbooks, and ex-

pounded in lectures, they would gradually be rationalized as the superstitious and magical beliefs were exposed to outside criticism and ridicule, while the element of genuine knowledge would be rapidly added to.

Before my motion came on for debate the Acting Surgeon-General came round to my office to discuss it with me. Writing home, I described the interview thus:

He is a man of personality, medium height, compact build, spare, quick, keen. I am told that recently at the hospital he was operating from 10 a.m. one morning to 2 a.m. the next, and muttering "ten thousand devils" most of the time. He agreed with me that my scheme was the best solution of the problem of providing medical service in India. European-trained doctors (i.e. those trained anywhere in scientific medicine) are only about 10 per cent of the number needed.

The motion came before the Legislative Council on September 2nd. We had resolved only the day before that the time limit for speeches should be reduced to ten minutes, which was too short a time in which to explain so novel an idea and advocate it with the requisite persuasiveness. One of the leading Madras physicians, Dr. C. B. Rama Rao, who was a member of the Publicity Board, spoke strongly and well in support, and I think the Brahmin benches were favourable, but there were protests from some of the non-Brahmins, to the effect that many of the best *vaidyans* took no fees, and would not wish to register. I did not have any opportunity to explain that my proposals would in no way affect their position. That, however, did not matter, as it was proposed on behalf of the Government that the proposal should be referred to a committee to be appointed to investigate that and kindred questions relating to the provision of medical aid.

Later I had an interview with that committee, but was not favourably impressed by its personnel. It did not appear to me to be either very keen or very well informed.

Before I left India the Surgeon-General returned from leave, and when the vital statistics for the previous year came out I drew his attention to the curious fact that the birth-rate for the District of Nellore, with a population of two millions odd, was returned as having been only ten per thousand, and its death-rate only

six. I asked whether there had not been some mistake in his office, as the true figures must have been several times as high. He replied that there had been no such mistake, the falsity was due entirely to defective registration; the local officers whose duty it was to keep the registers had recorded only a very small percentage of the births and deaths that had actually occurred. There is some reason in the saying that the first sign of an improvement in Indian health services would be a rise in the officially recorded death-rate.

Dravidian Scripts

My second individual effort fared worse. There was a motion for the appointment of a committee to enquire into the possibility and advisability of contriving a common script for the four chief Dravidian languages. These are Tamil, Telugu, Canarese and Malayalam; Tamil, in 1921, being spoken by 18,779,000 persons in India, and also by many in Ceylon, Telugu by 23,601,000, Canarese by 10,374,000 and Malayalam by 7,497,000 odd, making a total, apart from those in Ceylon or abroad, of just over sixty millions. All these languages, I contended, and the statement was not challenged, were so nearly related that if they had a common script, instead of the existing four, each unlike the others, a book printed in any one of them would be easily intelligible to readers of all four. Hence writers and publishers of books in these vernaculars would have access to a greatly enlarged public, and the necessary condition would be attained for a literary revival.

I was surprised and disappointed at the chilly reception of this proposal. I had expected that the desirability of the change would be admitted, and that the discussion would turn on its practicability. It was otherwise. The general feeling evidently was that the existing scripts were sacred, not to be rashly touched even by reformers from among those who had inherited them, and certainly not by a presumptuous European, who had never acquired a decent smattering of any of the languages. The motion was put to the vote and emphatically rejected. I received letters afterwards from various people regretting that I had had no better success; and also from one man forwarding a copy of a suggested script devised by a little group of teachers, not for Dravidian languages only but for all Indian languages.

For my part, I did not trouble much. I thought it was my

duty to warn these representatives of the ancient Dravidian culture, which I believed to be the basis of all Indian culture, that their languages were degenerating, on the one hand into a mere peasant *patois*, and on the other into objects of merely antiquarian interest, and that to make them once more effective implements of thought and expression was no small problem. They did not seem to care much; but seemed to be reconciled to the idea that the vernaculars should be used only to convey the simplest concrete ideas, and that English should be the vehicle of all more advanced thinking and information which newly became accessible after the days of John Company. Perhaps, after all, they were right.

When I left India I was regarded by many of my Indian friends as one who had put his hand to the plough and turned back. I thought that on the whole it was good for them that I should turn it over to those to whom the task of guiding it naturally belonged, and right for me to look for other work in my own country and among my own people. I was loath to leave beautiful Madras, but eager to be at home again.

CHAPTER XXXII

EPILOGUE

My story is ended.

But after the telling of a story of this sort there are always some listeners who ask "What do you think about . . . ?" or "What do you think ought to be done about . . . ?"

*Dra*vink it is well that I should try to anticipate such questions

My se give them candid answers, but with the reminder that the for the expressed are not those of one who can speak with and ar'ity. As I have shown, I caught but passing glimpses of Dra^a outside the Madras Presidency and its associated States, and My contacts with any part of India since the end of March 1922, though continuous, have only been slight. I give my impressions for what they may be worth.

The most important question is the future of India, and its relations with our own country and its government, still an unsolved problem in spite of the passing of the Government of India Act (1935). That Act, while it makes a new departure, can only serve provisionally; in the very nature of things it can only be expected at best to produce some immediate amelioration of the political condition of India, and to make approach to a more lasting and satisfactory settlement later. It will again create a new situation, as the enactment of the Montagu Reforms did sixteen years before.

Such observations as I have been able to make have left on my mind the impression that there has been a notable change in the attitude of the Indian mind since 1919. On the one hand a new spirit of self-respect and self-confidence has grown up among the younger men, and on the other British prestige has fallen greatly, but, I believe, not irremediably.

In order that British prestige may be restored, all persons whose duty or interest is involved in its maintenance must be brought to understand what is its true basis. After I returned to England, George Lansbury, speaking as one who knew talking to an ignoramus, told me it rested on British bayonets. That delusion unfortunately also dominates the minds of those who command the bayonets. They are there, though not in great numbers, but

in supporting British prestige they also damage it, and are an undesirable prop. The true basis is that indicated by the remark quoted on p. 333 of the cinema proprietor, "The Englishman says he will, and he does," and by that which, at least in Madras and in my time—I hope still and in all India—greeted the newcomer, "You are an Englishman, I can trust you."

I am greatly afraid that the quality of British administration in India has deteriorated as well as its prestige fallen. It would only be natural that it should be so. Governments, like other living organisms and organizations, aim first at self-preservation; the more their existence is threatened, the larger the proportion of their funds and energies which they use for their own protection, and the smaller that available for doing their proper work; it becomes a case of *propter vitam vitae perdere causas*—in order to continue to exist they whittle away the justification for their existence. It seems too plain that this has been to a considerable degree the case in India. In Westminster dangerous delusions about the Indian people are all too current, and very few, if any, of our "statesmen" realize how imminent was the danger of a breakdown of the existing order in 1921. If the Ali brothers had co-operated sincerely with Gandhi instead of playing foolishly and wickedly for their own hand, and if Gandhi had subordinated his true final aim of the spiritual advance of the people of India to his immediate one of overthrowing the "Satanic" rule of England, the Non-Co-operation movement in the form of refusal to pay taxes would pretty certainly have swept the country, the police would have been powerless, and the British troops in India would have been faced with an even more impossible task than that of the Black and Tans in Ireland. Indians are very quiescent and wonderfully patient, but once aroused to mass action they are, as is shown by the story of the Madras and Bombay strikes, not inferior even to British coal-miners in stubbornness. The same qualities were shown by the Gujerat peasantry in the Kaira strike against the payment in a bad year of land revenue, which was only settled by the Government agreeing to refer the dispute to Gandhi as arbitrator; and even more strikingly in the Akali riots in the Punjab, in which group after group of demonstrators marched towards the shrines in dispute, and when met by the police armed with *lathis*, allowed themselves to be

battered into unconsciousness without raising a hand in self-defence or retaliation, and day after day were succeeded by fresh volunteers.

The continuance of the reign of the King-Emperor in India cannot depend on force; and the effort so to maintain it can only hasten its end, and make that end a disastrous one. Some wiser policy must be found.

An alternative policy is suggested by the great success of Disraeli's brilliant idea, caught up so eagerly and pressed forward with so much determination by Queen Victoria, of proclaiming her Empress of India. It is worth while to mention this policy, though it is pretty certain that it lies outside the range of Cabinet or Parliamentary imagination. It is to put reality into the King's title of Emperor, and to treat that office as in no way inferior or subordinate to his office as King. This would mean abolishing the office of Secretary of State for India, and making the Viceroy (or Deputy or Acting-Emperor, as he then would be) directly responsible to His Majesty alone, and not to the British Cabinet, the British Prime Minister, or to the British House of Commons, in which India is not allowed a single representative. The affairs and interests of the Indian three hundred and fifty millions would not then be treated as merely one item in the manifold business of the British fifty millions. This change, which would seem reasonable and natural to Indians, would give a new and helpful start for the future; but it would, I have no doubt, be regarded as inconceivably far-fetched and absurd by our sagacious legislators.

Hence the only practicable course is to make the best of the newly enacted constitution, which reasserts the supremacy over India of Parliament, to Indians an alien assembly, acting through the old machinery of India Office and Secretary of State. It makes only minor changes in the Montagu constitution, but those changes are important; and it seems likely that they will turn out to be a net improvement, though this remains doubtful till tested by experience. Indians generally describe the effect of the Act by saying that it gives Home Rule to the Governor-General. In so far as it gives the Provincial Governors more freedom of action outside the interference of the Central Government, and the Central Indian Government a stronger position in relation to the clerks in the India Office, it is an improvement; but it is a serious blot that under the mistaken plea of "safeguards" it tightens

the grip of the City of London on Indian currency and Indian finance. The City financiers are themselves the danger against which safeguards are chiefly needed. It is also much to be regretted that the method of indirect election, rightly applied to the election of the Legislative Assembly, was not, as Gandhi suggested, and as some of the most experienced Indian administrators strongly urged, applied also to the election of the Provincial Legislative Councils. This would have made it possible to democratize the constitution by giving all adults a vote. Village meetings would then be held under the presidency of the village munsif, to choose a literate representative to cast the village vote.

I find among my Indian friends a practically unanimous opinion that the success or failure of the new constitution will depend on the choice of the Viceroy and the Provincial Governors. It will be necessary to search for and select the best of the men available, and then for the authorities at home to give them the utmost confidence.

It will also be necessary to make Indians feel:

(1) that Indian welfare is not now, and never will be again, sacrificed to the sectional interests of British merchants, manufacturers, financiers or bondholders;

(2) that the opinions of Indians, constitutionally expressed, on Indian affairs, will never again be ignored, nor overridden except for the gravest reasons, which will be fully and candidly explained;

(3) that this will apply to all subjects alike, whether "reserved" or not;

(4) that shams have now given place to realities.

Thus, for example, the pretended independent representation of India on the League of Nations, which is a sham as long as the representatives are chosen by the British Government without reference to Indian opinion, must be turned into reality by allowing the Legislative Assembly a decisive voice in the selection. And why should not this be done? To do it would raise British prestige among foreign nations, since the dodge by which our Government secured extra votes in the Assembly by calling them the votes of India must necessarily appear fraudulent to outsiders; and it would strengthen the League by effectively bringing into it a great and pacific nation.

Next, there are certain elementary principles fundamental to good government which must be applied to India.

The first of these is the subordination of the military to the civil power.

For this Lord Curzon contended with Lord Kitchener, but he was defeated and resigned the Viceroyalty, and since then the practical independence of the Army Chiefs of any Indian civil authority has been well established with only a slight check in the matter of the amount of money they are allowed to spend, and none at all on the purposes for which they spend it, although the most vital interests of India, and of a great deal more than India, are involved.

These Army Chiefs, like all professional specialists, look at all matters from a professional point of view. Their aim, all important to them, is to make the Indian Army the most perfect engine for war that the conditions and the amount of money allowed them permit. They have long been, and still are, allowed to control policy in relation to the North-West Frontier, and accordingly use the lands on both sides of the boundary as a vast practice ground, for the training of officers and rank and file in the use of the most modern methods of destroying human life. Hence continual warfare "to pacify the border," and directly the existing border is pacified it is pushed further into the mountains, and has to be "pacified" over again, as fresh "unruly tribes" are goaded into resistance. So, at least, the great majority of the Indians who possess information on the subject believe, as has been strikingly shown by the condemnation of the Frontier policy by the Legislative Assembly.

If it were the money of the British taxpayer that was so spent, these proceedings, I imagine, would not be allowed to continue without an authoritative enquiry into the question whether they were really necessary for their alleged purpose of defence. But because the money is squeezed out of the hungry and ill-clad millions of Indian taxpayers, the British electorate is indifferent; and the voice of the Indian electorate, when expressed constitutionally, is silenced on the ground that "foreign relations are a reserved subject."

As for the British interest in this matter, let it be noted that while we do not pay directly in *money* for these border wars,

indirectly we pay most heavily not in money only, but in the peril of our lives. For it was in order that the Simla Generals might carry on their border fighting by what they considered the most effective means that Lord Londonderry on behalf of the National Government vetoed the proposal before the Disarmament Conference to out-law bombing from the air, and killed the most promising effort to attain agreed measures of disarmament and collective security. Hence fresh international competition of armaments, more taxes, more debt, anti-gas drill, with bigger profits than ever for munitioneering firms of all sorts, from the great international combines that make warships, bombing machines, artillery and poison gas to the small firms that specialize in making gas masks.

Since India has declared its belief that the border warfare is unnecessary, and that peace on the Frontier can be much better secured by pacific and conciliatory means, there should surely be no delay in arranging for the thorough investigation into the accuracy of that belief by a body of men in whose competence and impartiality there can be full confidence. That should be done immediately, without waiting for the time when the new constitution is brought into existence.

Another matter which demands immediate investigation is the administration of civil and criminal law. I have already indicated how the existing systems operate in the Madras Presidency; I do not think that they work much better in the rest of India. They did not forty years ago—and probably there has not been much change since—as is indicated by what Miss Cornelia Sorabji observed when she pleaded her first case:

In 1894 one could still see little knots of candidates for the witness-box sitting under a banyan-tree in the court compound, being instructed in the evidence to be given in the pending cases. The scale at the time was, I believe, a rupee per man if he could stand cross-examination, eight annas if he were less skilled in lying.*

Since I have returned from India I have had to supervise the work of a good many Indian students from Bengal, the United Provinces and the Punjab doing research work into Indian rural economics for research degrees, and they were unanimous in

* *India Calling*, p. 61.

declaring that a ryot has no chance in the zemindari districts of getting justice in the courts against his landlord.

In this matter reform would be a difficult thing; but I think some useful proposals might be elicited if each provincial government were asked to put an experienced district officer on special duty to suggest plans.

A considerable improvement in criminal procedure would probably be easily possible if only the idea were fairly grasped that English methods do not suit India. That this is so, has been, I think, sufficiently demonstrated above, and the causes of that unsuitability adequately explained. The question whether the French institution of examining magistrates for preliminary investigation of all reported crimes would not secure more certain justice and better security in India might well be investigated.

Closely connected with this matter is the condition of the Indian police, who are thoroughly distrusted by the whole population. There may well be some hope that the relations between them and the people will improve somewhat when they are brought under provincial control, and with that there might come naturally an improvement in their moral standard. Indian peons can safely be entrusted with sums of money enormous in comparison with their pay—not to deliver it safely in accordance with the instructions of the sender is contrary to their occupational code, which is as sacred as a caste rule. If only the Indian police could be brought to make it part of their code to give no false evidence, not to accept bribes, and not to maltreat witnesses and accused persons unlawfully, they would become the best force in the world; and such a miracle is probably more possible in India than anywhere else.

Though the subject is tempting, I must refrain from writing about possible and desirable improvements in such fields of governmental activity as Education, Scientific Research, Means of Transport, Agriculture, Industries, Hygiene and Medical Aid. Such improvements will come on one condition, and on that alone—a spirit of cordial co-operation between the Indian Government and the Indian people. To attain that must be the task of the men on the spot; but to give them favourable conditions for its accomplishment it is necessary that the British people and the British Government should declare definitely that the British Empire has

an open door, and that it is for India to choose to stay in or go out.

Let that be fully understood on both sides, and it will be practically certain that India will choose to become a willing and loyal member of the Anglo-Asian Community of nations, and will long so continue. Let the right of egress be denied to India, and there will be no peace till the gates are forced, and all future relations between our little islands and that sub-continent, which might be so cordial and mutually advantageous, become poisoned with bitter memories.

There is no reason to despair of the nation which has produced Gandhi, Tagore and Bose, still less to look down upon it as racially inferior.

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